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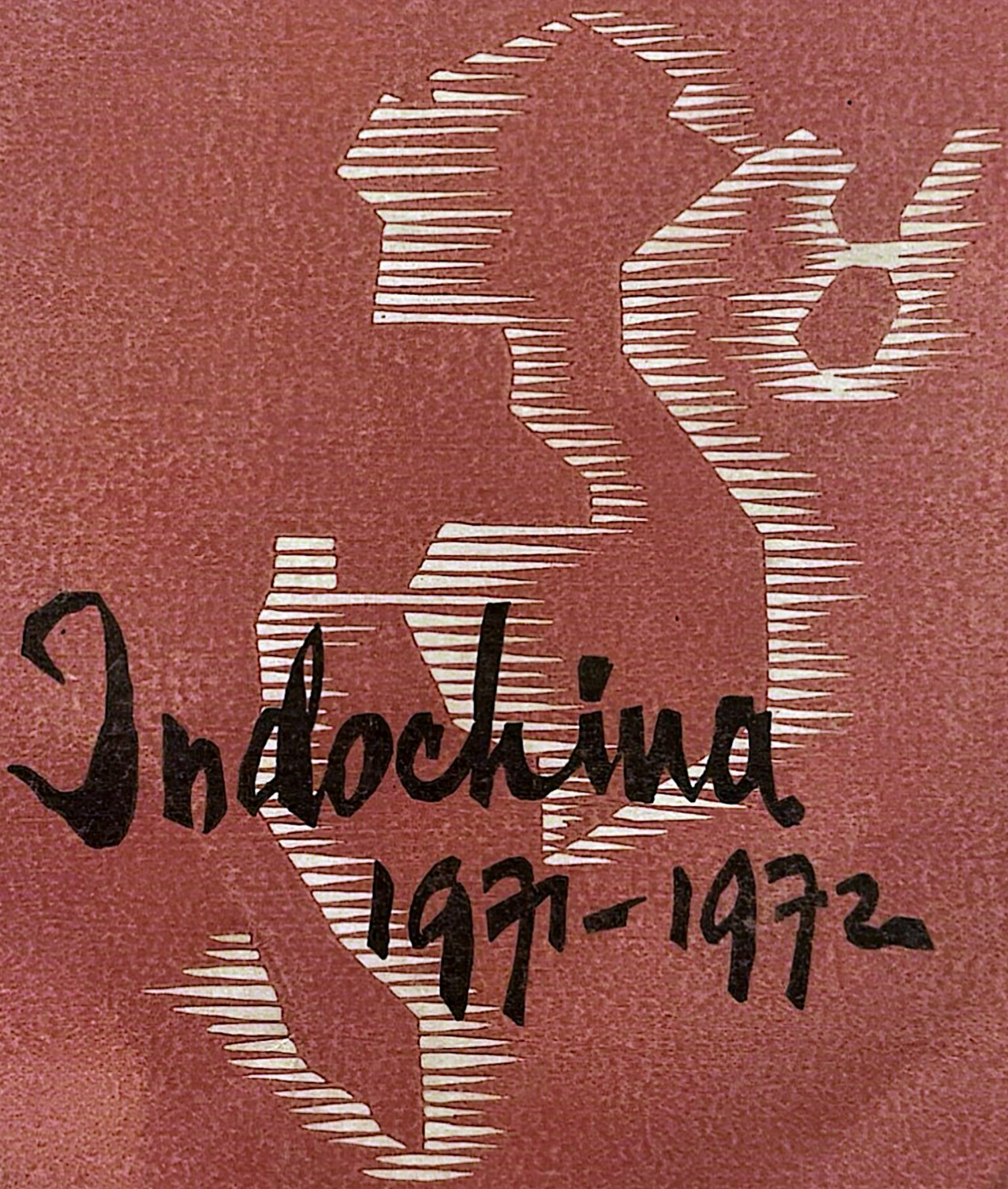
Vietnamese Studies



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The test of "Vietnamization"

NGUYEN HOANG

It was with a pledge to end the war in Viet Nam that Nixon was elected President of the United States. He had then all the required conditions to materialize his promise: the war-weary American nation was longing for a peaceful solution; the bombing halt in the DRVN created a favourable climate for negotiations which had actually begun in Paris with the participation of qualified representatives from North and South Viet Nam.

Only a few months after taking office, Nixon revealed himself to be what he had always been, an incorrigible hawk. Of all American politicians, he is among the diehards who advocate an ultra-reactionary global strategy based on American power and applying an aggressive neo-colonialism which might when necessary resort to military operations to secure world hegemony for the USA. Melvin Laird, his Defence Secretary, was sent to South Viet Nam for an on the spot enquiry; on his return the "Vietnamization" theory was born. It was consecrated by Nixon's speech on Nov. 3, 1969.

Vietnamization, said the US President, was one of the two means to end the war, the other being negotiations. Facts showed, however, that he had set his heart upon " Vietnamization " of which negotiations were only a byproduct: Washington would dictate its conditions to the Vietnamese people from a position of strength brought about by Vietnamization.

A " Vietnamized " war is still an American war

The war has thus been going on. It was soon spread by Nixon beyond the limits of Viet Nam — to Cambodia and Laos — something his predecessor L.B. Johnson had not dared to do. That is the second Indochina war which differs from the first as it now entails the participation of Thai troops from the other side of the Mekong river.

Nixon's phraseology has somewhat changed: he no longer talks of putting an end to the war, but only to US " involvement ". He has had to acknowledge that with him the war does not come to a stop: " This policy (of Vietnamization) ", he declared on Feb. 25, 1971 (...) " cannot end the war, save after a long period ". As is known to everybody, South Viet Nam has not, even since 1954, seen any day of peace: the " unilateral " war unleashed by Ngo Dinh Diem was followed by Kennedy's "special " war, then Johnson's " local " war, and now Nixon's " Vietnamized " war. All these wars are closely connected with US " involvement " and are the result of Washington's policy of

intervention and aggression. To claim that US " involvement " will cease while admitting that the war will continue, is either sheer nonsense or deception.

It is true that the US has been compelled to withdraw part of its troops from South Viet Nam, withdrawal made necessary by political, economic and military considerations and by growing pressure from US and world opinion. But the idea of maintaining a " residual " force for an indefinite period is still there and Melvin Laird reaffirmed it on January 13, 1972: " The United States would maintain a residual force in South Viet Nam ". That force will include: US air and naval forces, artillery, armoured vehicles, toxic chemicals, and more and more sophisticated lethal weapons, products of US technology. Neither will US military advisers and US units from the Seventh Fleet or stationed in Thailand be withdrawn.

The war, " Vietnamized " as it is, is still financed, directed and partly waged by Americans in the interests of US imperialism: it is and will remain an American war.

1971: a crucial year for " Vietnamization "

Since 1969, a new military strategy has been applied in South Viet Nam: instead of " searching and destroying " adverse forces, the US command was on the defensive, the stress being laid on " pacification " with a view to controlling populated areas. From time to time troops were launched into peripheral zones,

first and foremost against the PLAF strategic logistics system and also against their troop concentrations after accurate spotting. In 1969 - 1970, such attacks were preferably mounted by GIs so as to make the best use of their last days in South Viet Nam; this explained, for instance, the invasion of Cambodia in May-June 1970 by US troops.

As for the Saigon army, it was spared, as much as possible, during those years 1969 - 1970, from going into big scale confrontations with enemy forces. Efforts were then concentrated on improving it quantitatively and qualitatively. Through hectic arm-twisting drafts in the course of "sweeps" new recruits were added to the so-called ARVN (Army of the Republic of Viet Nam) and other military and para-military formations, thus bringing to nearly one million the total strength of armed mercenaries on US payroll. Intensive training was imposed on officers and men alike. Special attention was paid to rapidly new specialized arms and services: tanks, armour, air force, navy, etc. Big units of strategic reserve were constituted, especially units of "paras", "rangers", "marines".

Preparations also went ahead in Cambodia and Laos. The Lon Nol army was up from 30,000 to 210,000 men within a record time. The Lao Royal Army being rated inefficient following the Nam Bak defeat in 1968, Washington's hopes rested with Vang Pao's CIA-controlled "Armée clandestine"; then, as those Meo warriors' own fighting capability proved to be at best dubious in the defeat of Operation "Kou Kiet" (August 1969 - Feb. 1970), Thai troops were

sent en masse to their rescue. Vietnamization, Khmerization, Laosization, Asianization — such new words seem rather characteristic of Nixon's policy.

1971 was chosen to put to test these new tools of US neo-colonialism. The results were indeed pitiful:

On Highway 9 (Southern Laos) and in North-eastern Cambodia in Feb-March 1971, then at Snuol (Cambodia) in May 1971, the cream of the Saigon army was beaten flat-footed. As a result, the lingering image of "Vietnamization" ever since has been that of a puppet soldier clinging, in his escape, to the skids of a US helicopter.

The same thing happenned with "Khmerization" and "Laosization" (and "Asianization" as well, since Thai troops were involved in Laos). Let us mention Operation "Chenla 2" in Cambodia in August-November 1971 and the Plain of Jars, Muong Sui and Sam Thong - Long Cheng operations in Laos in December 1971 - January 1972.

These defeats undoubtedly were very ominous for the "Nixon doctrine" in Indochina, the more so as they occurred at a time when some 200,000 GIs were still there and when the puppet armies could still rely on a powerful support by US air force and artillery. With more US troops forced to withdraw, one wonders how the puppet armies manage to get out of trouble.

Face to them, patriotic forces have been making giant strides. The case of Cambodia is typical: the Khmer resistance has freed four-fifths of Cambodian

territory, and Phnom Penh, the principal lair of the US-puppets, is finding the noose tightening around its neck. In Laos, the two strategic areas — Plain of Jars and Plateau of Bolovens — were liberated from the enemy yoke. Not only did the logistics system of the Indochinese revolutionary forces remain intact, but North-eastern Cambodia, the Bolovens Plateau and the South Viet Nam High Plateaux now form a continuous stretch of land, which apparently is far from helping the Pentagon strategists and General Abrams to keep their cool.

"In spreading the war of aggression into Cambodia and now into Laos, the United States has turned the three Indochinese countries into one battlefield", remarked Premier Pham Van Dong on the first days of Operation "Lam Son 719" launched by the US and Saigon regime against Southern Laos (Feb. 1971). This was a special feature of primary importance in the Indochinese military situation in 1971. It has a great impact on events inside South Viet Nam, more particularly on "pacification".

"Pacification": blighted hopes

If in Westmoreland's strategy "pacification" was one of the two prongs of a pincer — the other prong being "search-and-destroy operations", Nixon, who relied on British expert R.K. Thompson's advice, had ordered Abrams to raise "pacification" to the station of a major strategic means to win the war. The success

of "Vietnamization" would depend for a greater part upon "pacification".

Four successive programmes of "pacification" have been put into effect since 1969. "Phoenix" teams composed of the most blood-thirsty thugs were sent to rural areas where, together with a police force whose effectives doubled. Between the beginning of 1970 and the end of 1971, they were entrusted with the task of tracking down revolutionaries, tightly controlling the population, arresting and killing or kidnapping and assassinating any "suspected" person. "Sweeps" were conducted without let-up, and the "Three All" policy (kill all, destroy all, burn all) fully applied.

To subdue the people, the Yanks did not hesitate to remove, by helicopters or planes, entire villages and squeeze them into "strategic hamlets" near bases or big cities where they could be controlled day and night. A plan under way in Quang Tri and other northern provinces of South Viet Nam was intended to create a forcible exodus involving hundreds of thousands of people who had to leave for the southernmost part of the country.

To serve "pacification", whole areas were declared 'free-fire" zones, submitted to toxic sprays, razed by gigantic bulldozers called "Rome plows" or levelled by 75-ton superbombs. Never before has barbarity reached such "daisy-cutter" levels as under Nixon.

The mail fist was coupled with a velvet hand: US psywar services lavishly supplied peasants with pumps, tractors, mowing-machines, Honda motor-bikes, TV

sets, transistor radios, everything to draw them towards the "American way of life" and make them forget all about the struggle for national liberation. After three years of strenuous efforts, however, American officials themselves had to admit that the US had fallen short of the two main objectives of "pacification" namely to "destroy the Viet Cong's infrastructure" and "win the hearts and minds" of the South Vietnamese people. The situation in all the four military areas worsened, and in certain places it became frightfully precarious as the *Washington Post* remarked on Aug. 1, 1971. In areas where the greatest security prevailed, acknowledged John Paul Vann, US adviser on "pacification" in one of the military areas, the majority of the people remained opposed to the Saigon administration, and the "Viet Cong's infrastructure" remained intact.

The great reverses sustained by the puppet armies in Laos and Cambodia had a demoralizing effect upon members of the Saigon military and para-military forces, including "pacifiers". To top it off, the sight of leading officials in the puppet administration clashing with one another in the "presidential election", and Washington's statements on a possible "flexibility" concerning the question of Nguyen Van Thieu's resignation have driven everyone in the Saigon camp, particularly low-ranking officials, into thinking first of all of their own fate. The existence of a *modus vivendi* between the Saigon "self-defence" forces and the revolutionary masses in villages and hamlets has already been noticed by the Western press. This is all the more

understandable as the setbacks of the Saigon army right at a moment when the GIs are getting out give everyone the impression that nothing now can prevent the PLAF big units from closing in on populated areas and big urban centres.

Political and economic aspect of "Vietnamization"

Melvin Laird declared on Sept. 26, 1969: "Vietnamization means a lot more than modernization of the South Vietnamese armed forces to permit their continuing assumption of more military responsibility, Vietnamization means the progressive transfer to the South Vietnamese of responsibility for all aspects of the war and management of their affairs: stronger government, stronger economy, stronger military forces, stronger police for internal security."

On the political plane, legislative and presidential elections had been scheduled for Saigon in 1971. It is an open secret to everybody that Nixon prefers Nguyen Van Thieu who is regarded as his selected tool for carrying through his neo-colonialist policy, a man whom he once described as one of the four or five greatest leaders in Asia. To see Thieu and his clique confirmed in the leading posts of the puppet State through "democratic elections" had always been the US President's dream. However, anti-Thieu feelings (which sprang from a growing anti-Americanism) ran so high in Saigon that Thieu deemed it necessary to resort to dictatorial methods so as to secure his own re-election. Those methods,

added to a White House menace against anyone who would stage a coup against Thieu, soon provoked a strong reaction among public opinion. " Vice-President " Nguyen Cao Ky and General Duong Van (Big) Minh withdrew from the race and the electoral farce was fully exposed.

Far from giving Washington an opportunity to shore up the Saigon puppet regime, the 1971 elections only widened the cracks that had long existed in it. Meanwhile, in US-occupied urban centres popular actions intensified: never was the anti-US front so broad, embracing new social strata and personalities hitherto staying aloof from any active politics.

The opposition of the masses to the pro-US regime was all the more violent as Thieu took in 1971 a whole series of economic measures in the sole interest of " Vietnamization ".

Since it was the Washington rulers' intent to wage, in keeping with this policy, a less costly war, the South Vietnamese had to shoulder a greater part of the war expenditures. To this must be added the economic and financial difficulties assailing the US itself, and entailing, among other things, the measures adopted by Nixon on Aug. 15, 1971, the reduction of US foreign aid by the Senate and the devaluation of the dollar. What ensued in the areas controlled by the US and Saigon, was an increase in taxes and duties, a galloping inflation, soaring prices and finally the devaluation of the piastre.

The situation was no brighter in Phnom Penh and Vientiane. The puppets there scrambled for the US

manna, blaming one another for powerlessness in face of the mounting wave of mass struggle and the armed resistance of the patriots.

In Phnom Penh, In Tam, one of the leaders of the March 18, 1970 coup d'etat, was stripped of his three functions at a time: vice-premier, interior minister, and brigadier-general; the " National Assembly " was dissolved by Lon Nol who now ruled by decrees; the capital city of the " Khmer Republic " lived under a constant threat of food and fuel shortage; the riel was officially devalued, its rate falling from 55 to 140 riels a dollar.

In Vientiane, Ouane Ratikoune, chief-of-staff of the Lao Royal Army and a man trusted by Souvanna Phouma, was ousted, the old politician Phoui Sananikone and his clan saw their influence waning while the star of Sisouk Na Champassak, a member of the rival Lower Laos clique, continued mounting; the kip underwent the same trial as the piastre and the riel when following a new devaluation it dropped by 20 per cent compared to the dollar.

Neo-colonialist bellicosity and obduracy

Since Nixon's main effort was directed towards the various aspects of " Vietnamization ", one should not expect the Paris Conference to move forward. Throughout 1971 and up to now, Washington has shown but little interest in it.

David K. Bruce was recalled and for months no chief US delegate was appointed until the arrival in Paris

fo William Porter was announced. This former overlord of "pacification" in Saigon, while rehashing the same allegations as his predecessors, displayed an unusual impertinence: many times, and more particularly in December 1971 and January-February 1972, he unilaterally decided to cancel plenary sessions of the conference without giving any plausible reason. Such incidents often coincided with waves of massive air strikes against the DRVN, and each time Washington invoked its right to "protective reaction", "protection of the GIs' lives", and even the existence of a so-called "tacit understanding" between the DRVN and the USA in 1968. These were pretexts that only betrayed Nixon's aggressive designs.

On July 1, 1971, a new proposal — the seven-point plan for the settlement of the South Viet Nam problem — was put forward by Mrs Nguyen Thi Binh. It was warmly welcomed by public opinion, in Washington as well as in Saigon and elsewhere. 70 governments voiced support for this peace initiative of the PRG. The State Department had to acknowledge the existence of "positive elements" in these seven points, but refused to give them a serious response.

As a counter-offensive, on Jan. 25, 1972 Nixon made a sensational statement. Reneging his own recommendations, he revealed the existence and falsified the content of private talks between the DRVN and US delegations, the secrecy of which both delegations had promised to keep. In so doing he hoped to prove that he had been exerting all efforts in search of a solution. However, the DRVN representatives had always pointed

out that modalities of negotiations were of small importance, that what mattered was the substance of the talks. US negotiators precisely lacked this essential element for successful conversations; the desire to reach a genuine settlement based on respect for the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights, and renunciation of any attempt to secure a military victory.

On Jan. 25, 1972 Nixon also made public an eight-point peace plan which he described as a "most generous offer". A careful study shows, however, that while giving a semblance of concession — Thieu's resignation one month before elections, leaving intact the whole military and police apparatus, not to mention the corruption that plagues it—this proposal simply demanded that South Vietnamese patriots lay down their weapons, recognize the Saigon puppet regime and contribute to legalizing, through elections "*à la Saigonnaise*", a neocolonialist regime owing allegiance to the USA.

It goes without saying that Nixon's plan is unpalatable to the Vietnamese people. The PRG elaboration on Feb. 2, 1972 laid in clear terms the conditions for a genuine settlement of the Viet Nam problem:

— Cessation of the US air war and all other acts of war against the whole of Viet Nam; setting of a specific date for the total and unconditional withdrawal of all US armed forces, military advisers, weapons and war means.

— Cessation of all US intervention in the internal affairs of South Viet Nam: immediate resignation of Nguyen Van Thieu, dismantling of the whole coercive

machine for the people to fully enjoy their right to self-determination.

As for the problems of Laos and Cambodia, a statement by the DRVN Government on Feb. 6, 1972 stressed that "the US government must respect the Geneva Agreements of 1954 on the Indochinese countries and those of 1962 on Laos, stop its intervention and aggression in the Indochinese countries and let each Indochinese people settle themselves their own affairs without foreign interference. The problems concerning the Indochinese countries shall be settled by the Indochinese parties among themselves on the basis of mutual respect for independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and non-interference in each other's internal affairs."

No "low profile" possible

The US president likes to repeat that the "Nixon doctrine" is composed of three elements: sharing responsibilities, US strength, and negotiations. These elements can be found in the "Vietnamization" policy which he presented as the first application of his "doctrine". The sharing of responsibilities and US strength can best be translated by the formula: native troops + US fire power, logistic support and dollars. As far as negotiations are concerned, an indication of their real value is given by the behaviour of the US delegation in Paris.

A parallel may be drawn between the "Nixon doctrine" and "Vietnamization" as to their objectives:

the first aims at realizing the US imperialists' global strategy and world hegemony, while the second tries to secure the US hold on South Viet Nam and enslave her people.

To these three basic components Nixon added a fourth element of a tactical value: the "low profile", or self-effacement, calculated camouflage, intended to allay suspicion and facilitate Washington's game.

Uncle Sam plans to give a "low profile" of himself in the Viet Nam war, which in turn should cast a "low profile" on the political and economic life of the USA.

The year 1971, however, gave a proof of the futility of Nixon's endeavours.

The war continued to be frontpaged in the big papers of the US and the world. The debacles of Southern Laos at the beginning, and of "Chenla 2" and Long Cheng at the end, of the year, with the participation of the USAF and the CIA, threw a stark light on the myth of Vietnamization, Khmerization and Laosization. The one-man presidential race in October 1971 in Saigon where Bunker's role as stage manager was more than visible, compelled the American man-in-the-street to ask why the White House was carrying on this war which cost, even now, at least a dozen billion dollars per year. Revelation of the Pentagon papers and the Calley case have brought further proofs of the criminal, immoral and illegal character of this neo-colonialist venture which Nixon keeps going.

The Viet Nam war, now becoming the Indochina war by the will of Nixon, has not ceased to be a major concern for the American and world peoples. Even the

families of US pilots captured in North Viet Nam — whose organization is the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia — formerly victims of Nixon's chauvinistic propaganda, on Sept. 30, 1971 raised their voice to demand the setting of a precise date for total withdrawal of US troops, cessation of any support to the Nguyen Van Thieu administration and acceptance of the PRG's seven points. As for the world support of the Vietnamese and Indochinese peoples' struggle, it was again forcefully expressed in the resolutions of the great "World Assembly for Peace and Independence of the Indochinese Peoples" meeting at Versailles in February 1972 with the participation of representatives from 84 countries including the United States.

For all of Nixon's ballyhoos about his doctrine and the results of its application in Viet Nam and Indochina, and all his big-scale diplomatic manœuvres, facts on the Indochinese fronts where patriotic forces are in a position of victorious offensive, and the just stand of the Indochinese peoples, are there to lay bare his real intention.

More than ever before, the world situation is favourable to their fight. People realize more and more clearly that "the main content of the struggle against imperialism is the struggle against neo-colonialism" (1). Taking part in this struggle are the forces of socialism,

(1) Le Duan: "*Forward Under the Glorious Banner of the October Revolution*", Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1967.

of the national liberation movement, and those working for democracy, peace and social progress in capitalist countries. For all these forces the resistance of the Indochinese peoples against US neo-colonialism has the value of a symbol which is of direct concern for them.

One may easily understand the obstinacy with which Nixon is sticking to Indochina and his efforts to give the Indochina problem a solution to his liking. He is looking forward not only to his reelection, but also to the long-range interests of US imperialism of which he is the very embodiment. For him, to carry the day over the Indochinese peoples would mean dealing a severe blow at the socialist camp and the national-liberation movement, and securing US supremacy over the rest of the world.

But the Vietnamese people, encouraged by their initial successes over "Vietnamization", and strong with the support of the entire progressive mankind, is firmly resolved to coordinate their actions with those of the brotherly peoples of Laos and Cambodia, for the triumph of peace and national independence in the Indochinese peninsula. In so doing they are fulfilling not only their patriotic duty, but also a highly internationalist task.

March 1972

Military events in 1971

H.X. BINH

A test year for the native troops

On the military plane, Nixon's foremost concern when coming to power was to restore and reinforce the puppet army which was of poor military quality and completely demoralized. The years 1969 and 1970 saw huge US economic and military potential mobilized for this work.

Billions of dollars were spent to this end. Forced recruitments were made to replenish the effectives and even to slightly outstrip the figure before 1968. Thanks to a method called *don quan* (troop build-up), the regular troops and the units of the strategic general reserve were in essence restored. It should be recalled that the puppet armed forces were composed of several categories of troops. On top of the ladder are the regular troops formed by the ARVN divisions (ten), and units of the strategic general reserve (a "paratroop" division, a marine division and reserve units of different military regions, "rangers" groups). Next come the regional troops composed of *Bao An* (security forces), village troops or *Zan Ve* (village militia). At the bottom of the

ladder are village para-military formations or "civil defence" units (*Phong Ve Zan Su*). The process of *don quan* consisted in drafting all adults, men and women, even 14-year-old children, and incorporating them into "civil defence" units to protect "strategic hamlets", thus freeing this task from the "village militia" which became local forces serving as props to the "pacification" program. The most seasoned elements of the militia were transferred to the "security forces" and the best of which promoted to units of the regular troops. Armament and military equipment were renewed and modernized. Intensive training was given to the new recruits while measures were taken to gain the consent or at least to calm the discontent of the young draftees thanks to material advantages, and a psychological move carried out by the specialized services.

After nearly two years of efforts, according to Saigon official figures, in November 1971, the puppet armed forces reached 1,180,000 men divided as follows:

– regular forces (ARVN): 481,000, including 420,000 for the ground forces, 38,000 for the navy and 23,000 for the air force.

– other forces: 705,000 men, among them 275,000 for the regional troops (*Bao An*), 230,000 for the "militia" and "civil defence", and 200,000 for the police.

However, these figures were far below the truth, because, at each echelon of the hierarchy of the puppet army and administration, they were purposely "swollen" and the expenses destined to those "ghost units", paid by the Americans, were pocketed by the responsible

officers, from general staff officers to chiefs of post in the villages. The figure of 800,000 was nearer to fact. About half of these effectives belonged to the regular troops.

Until 1971, according to the Pentagon official figures the Americans had given their Saigon puppets 910,000 infantry individual and collective fire-arms, 45,000 lorries, 776 helicopters and airplanes, 45,000 radio sets, 2,100 heavy guns and tanks, 940 naval craft, etc. Some dozen US naval bases were handed over to the puppets, thousands of aircraft and helicopter pilots, and aviation mechanicians and technicians were trained in urgence. In a short period of time, Thieu's South Viet Nam possessed a navy and an air force ranking among the first eight of the "free" world, while his ground forces were indisputably the best equipped in Southeast Asia. Thus, in resuming its role of unique strategic force as in the "special war" of the years 1961 - 1965, the puppet army now had at its disposal an armament and equipment much greater in quantity. Besides, it benefited from the US armed forces by an air and logistic support several times more powerful than before. It was better kept under control by the US command which held the purse-strings for its survival.

After two years of preparation, the time had come to put this instrument, forged at great expenses, to the test of the battlefield. The result of this operation would be an eloquent proof of the success of the "Nixon doctrine", allowing Washington to proclaim in the face of the world and the American people that "Vietnamization" was a success, that the United States attained its

objectives in Viet Nam, that the US expeditionary corps would completely be repatriated save a certain number of advisers, etc. In 1971 Nixon would enter the elections, crowned with the prestige brought about by a great military victory.

A year earlier (1970), the instrument would not have been ready for the test and the risk of a setback too great.

To delay this test would mean a handicap for the electoral campaign and would also imply great risks on the battlefield. Indeed, with the progressive repatriation of GIs (1) which Nixon could not elude, what remained of the US expeditionary corps in 1972 could not give sufficient support to the puppet troops and, if need be, intervene rapidly in a decisive manner to save them from defeat. The year 1971 was the " opportune " moment to proceed to this important experimentation.

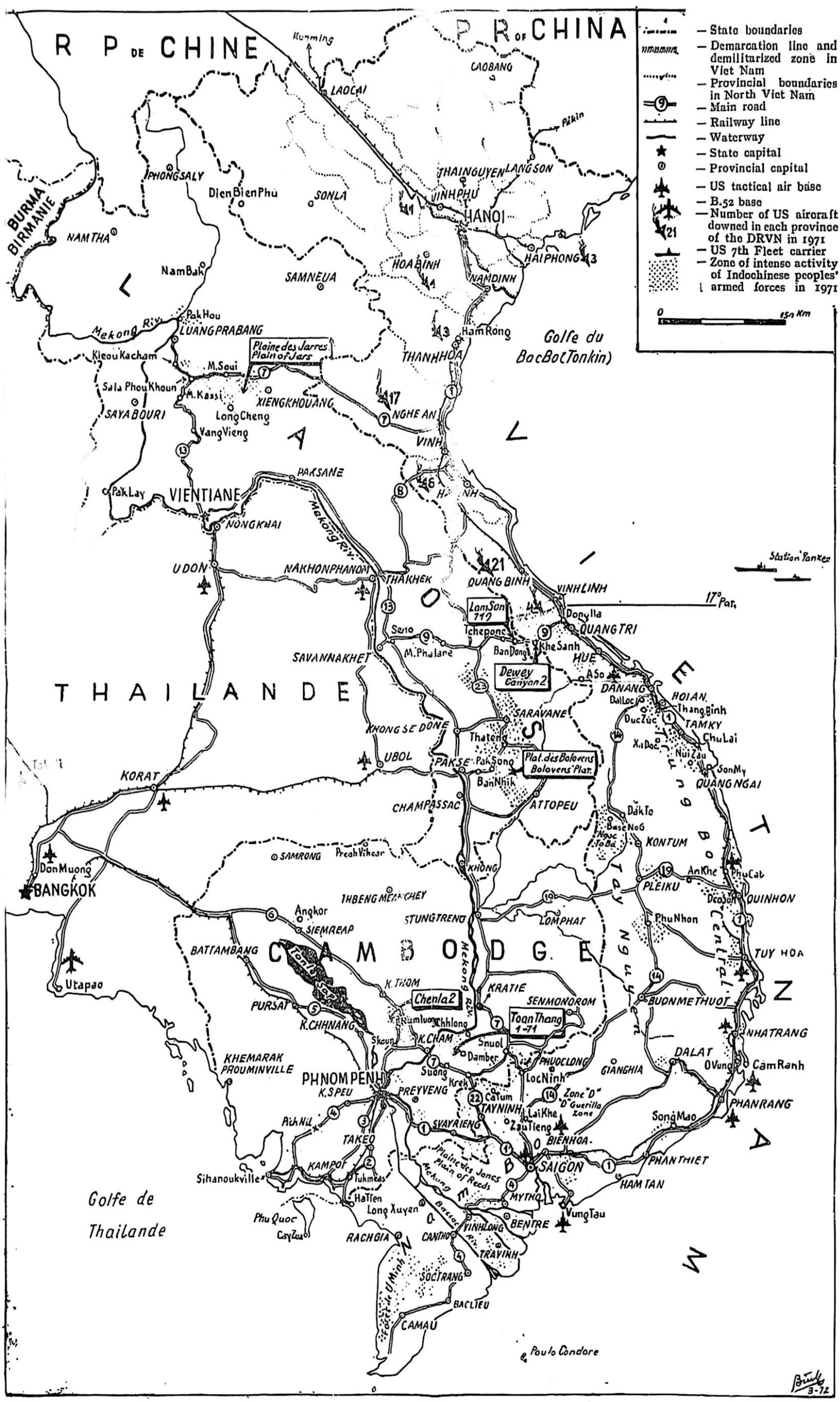
Truly speaking, the " Nixon doctrine " was not exclusively applied to Viet Nam.

In Laos, the GIs never operated in corporate units, except the air squadrons on continual and massive raids or the small " Green Beret " detachments on special reconnaissance or sabotage missions. US infantry units sometimes penetrated into Lao territory but they never advanced very far beyond the frontiers and quickly withdrew to South Viet Nam.

1. US effectives in South Viet Nam

1961 :	3,200	1962 :	11,000	1963 :	17,000
1964 :	27,300	1965 :	184,300	1966 :	390,000
1967 :	497,000	1968 :	545,000	1969 :	543,400
1970 :	349,000	Dec. 1971 :	178,300	March 1972 :	114,500

Military operations on the Indochinese theatre in 1971



Washington proceeded to the "special war" there. But after their disaster at Nam Bak, northeast of Luang Prabang in January 1968, the Vientiane troops proved incapable of assuming the role assigned by the US command which relied on the bands of pirate chief Vang Pao. This adventurer, a former Meo noncom. in the native auxiliary troops recruited by the French colonialists in the first Indochina war, was maintained by the C. I. A, promoted officer, then general commander of the military region. He recruited his men from the Meo tribes living on the high peaks of Upper Laos. His bands, paid, fostered, equipped, commanded by American "civilians", agents of the C. I. A, were not dependent on the Vientiane authority. However, they had been quickly decimated by Lao patriots and as early as 1970, Washington had to use Bangkok troops camouflaged under the label of "Thai volunteers" to operate in Laos.

In Cambodia, after the reactionary putsch staged in March 1970 by the American secret services, the militarily weak army controlled by Lon Nol was helpless. The massive delivery of American weapons, the introduction of Saigon units composed of "Khmer Krom", Khmer-born soldiers (1), intensive recruitment (2) and the recourse to American, South Korean, Australian,

1. More than half a million Khmers live in the provinces of the Mekong delta in South Viet Nam where they constitute one of the most important ethnic minorities.

2. From 35,000 men in March 1970, the effectives of Lon Nol puppet army rose to 180,000 in 1971, according to Phnom Penh official figures.

Saigon and Thai instructors did not give much improvement to this new instrument. In 1970 and a good part of 1971, Saigon troops were used as a main force of intervention in Cambodia after the prohibition by the Congress of using the GIs on this new theatre of operations. However, a " Khmerization " remained necessary and Nixon also had to prove its success on the battlefield in the course of the year 1971.

American strategic and tactical objectives in 1971

According to the American press, the US command reckoned that not only could it cope with the Indochinese compatriots' attacks in 1971 but it would be able to forestall others in 1972, the election year, at a time when the remainder of the US expeditionary corps being too weak, a great setback would be harmful to Nixon's re-election.

On the operational plane, two measures were taken to achieve those objectives:

— Launch large-scale counter-offensives to improve the strategic defence system and strike at the adverse logistic service. This measure was to meet several aims : to weaken the adversary materially by destroying his stores of foodstuffs and throw his supplies into disorder, nip in the bud his plans of offensive, create the opportunity for the newly regrouped or formed puppet forces to train themselves.

Strengthen the defence of the threatened fronts, chiefly the towns, bases, and communication lines, step

up " pacification " and the concentration of inhabitants of the populated areas, mainly in the South, which would free the bulk of the army for planned counter-offensives. A tighter control of the population would increase the possibility of pressganging men and extorting money for the war, lessen the people's material support to the patriotic forces and render the latter's offensives difficult. The carrying out of " pacification " (1), the centrepiece of " Vietnamization ", would make it possible for Nixon to gain in all fields : maintaining South Viet Nam under a US neo-colonialist regime, reducing US losses to a level acceptable to to American public opinion, repatriating the bulk of the US forces, all that to obtain a second mandate in the White House.

On the strategic and tactical plane, the following points were drawn from an analysis of facts:

The American armed forces, thinned down by irreversible withdrawal and weakened by grave demoralization no longer played the role of spearhead. It was the Saigon puppet troops to play this role not only in Viet Nam but also in the two other theatres of operations, given their superiority over their Lao and Khmer counterparts in effectives, armament, equipment and fighting experience.

The US infantry only served as a mobile reserve and support force, ensuring the rears of the opened fronts. On the contrary, US fire-power played a foremost role : massive bombings of supply routes and zones

(1) On "pacification" see article "the US-Thieu Regime".

supposed to be adverse bases, tactical interventions with close machinegunnings and bombings, air observation, heliliftings of troops.

An important part was given to the use of new weapons and ultra-mordern techniques to such an extent that the Western press spoke of an "electronic war". Along suspected adverse penetration roads, US aircraft dropped hundreds of thousands of sophisticated detection devices. Some like the ADSID (air delivered seismic intrusion detector) which registers and transmits by radio the soil vibrations at the passage of trucks or foot-passengers and which, once dropped by airplanes and stuck in the earth, looks like a dry shrub. Others were acoustic or magnetic detectors capable of picking up even the conversations of passers-by in the controlled zone or tell whether they are armed or not, etc. "People sniffers" were used to determine the concentration of troops by detecting the ammonia in human urine. Radio signals emitted by these devices are picked up and relayed by electronic reconnaissance planes flying continually over the region. In the US bases in South Viet Nam and Thailand, those informations were received by computers which give the coordinates of the targets for a sortie of supersonic fighter-bombers or B.52 super-bombers which carry as much as 32 tons of bombs each.

The range of lethal gadgets was also considerably widened from small anti-personnel mines to 15,000-lb super-bombs (7 tons) (1). Much improved bombing

(1) Pentagon research workers have always fangled new gadgets to replace those foiled by the inventive spirit of the Vietnamese people in a rather short time. They are anti-personnel mines including sophisticated shrapnel canisters difficult to be found on a soil strewn with dead leaves, mines with branching galleries which, when touching the ground, fling with the help of springs in different directions, tenuous threads which explode when interfered. Mention should also be made of traps which kill those who try to unprime them in the old methods, bombs delayed at various, times but dropped at the same time on a given zone, rendering the access to it very dangerous for a long time, fragmentation bombs the shrapnel of which is made up of plastic balls which cannot be detected by X-rays in the wounds or sharp iron arrows small enough to be contained in the thousands in each bomb, great enough to cause deep and often mortal wounds and always difficult to extract.

techniques were worked out (bombs guided by radar, television or laser, etc.).

In brief, Nixon counted on a military victory with native ground forces in which the Saigon puppet troops constituted the core, supported by US fire-power and technique after the classical formula of a "puppetized" war.

Regarding the Indochinese revolutionary forces, stimulated by the brilliant victories won in 1970 and by the fraternal solidarity sealed at the Indochinese Peoples' Conference held in April 1970, they made great efforts to deal a finishing blow at the "Nixon doctrine". US invasion of Cambodia and its intensification of the war in Laos turned Indochina into a unique battlefield. The three Vietnamese, Lao and Khmer peoples were to struggle against a common enemy: US imperialism. It was necessary to examine the military situation from

this angle to have an exact judgment of the unfolding of the Second Indochina War.

"Lam Son 719" and "Toan Thang I-71" - the cream of the Saigon army annihilated

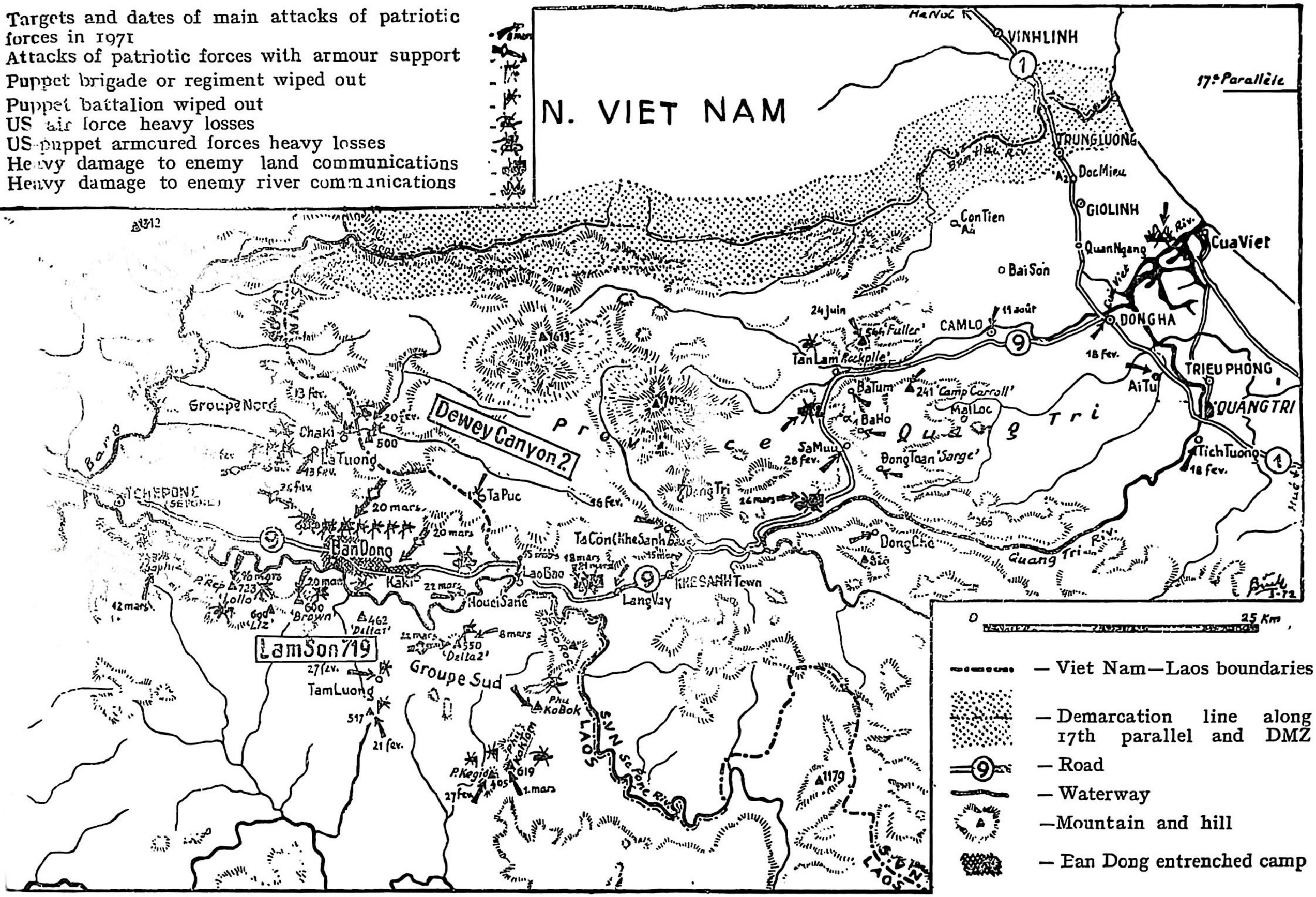
A series of large-scale counter-offensives were launched in 1971 by the pro-US forces in Indochina, specially in Laos and Cambodia. Operations "Lam Son 719", "Toan Thang 1-71", "Chenla 2" and the encroachments on the Plain of Jars and the Bolovens Plateau were the most important operations.

"LAM SON 719" (1) launched on February 8, 1971 was unquestionably the greatest operation of this kind. It was aimed at completely isolating the anti-US struggle in South Indochina, an aim already pursued by the March 18, 1970 reactionary putsch in Phnom Penh. If in early 1971 the pro-US forces had succeeded in cutting the liberated zone of Lower Laos into two parts, the resistance of Cambodia and South Viet Nam would have completely been deprived of the material support of other Indochinese countries, the socialist camp and the justice- and peace-loving people in the world. The importance of the aim explained the scope of the means used.

A preparatory action had been taken (Operation "Dewey Canyon 2") as early as late January by the American troops and South Vietnamese puppets in the

(1) See the booklet *From Khe Sanh to Chepone* published by the Hanoi weekly *Viet Nam Courier*, 1971.

The region bordering on the 17th parallel and Road 9
Operations "Lam son 719" and "Dewey Canyon 2"



northern part of Quang Tri province, bordering on the demilitarized zone of the 17th parallel, and taking Road 9 as an axis from Dong Ha to the Lao frontier through Khe Sanh. The war machine for the invasion of Lower Laos in the Chepone region crossed by Road 9 was set up within a week with the participation of 30,000 GIs and Saigon troops. On February 8, leaving this Vietnamese sector, considered a starting base, to the care of American troops, 20,000 of Thieu's troops accompanied by hundreds of US "advisers" in Saigon uniform penetrated into Laos in three thrusts parallel to Highway 9: the northern group made up of a tactical group of rangers and a paratroop brigade serving as a shield against attacks from the most exposed directions; the southern group, composed of three regiments of the First Infantry Division known as the best troops and of a marine brigade protecting the left flank and searching a region suspected to be crammed with adverse supply stocks and logistic bases; the central group would rush forward through Highway 9 to Chepone regarded as the hub of the adverse logistic network and, if all went well, would drive further west a wedge in this narrow part of the liberated regions of Lower Laos. The forces of the central group were composed of a paratroop brigade and an important "task force" of armoured cavalry called "special mission brigade".

US aviation played a chief role in this campaign, mustering as many as 2,000 planes and helicopters, among which from 600 to 800 cargo choppers (troops and material), and fire cover, and 50 B.52 strato-fortresses. The tempo of sorties was most intense: 145,700,

totalling 57,900 flying hours in two weeks ending March 11, according to USIS.

The US 7th Fleet not only sent its aircraft to the theatre of operations but also ensured the supply by sea and pounded the objectives near the sea coast to protect the direct rears and kept the southern part of the DRVN under a constant threat of invasion in order to relieve the right flank of this front.

The American grip in this adventure was still marked by the fact that the operational plan had been elaborated by Abrams' staff and ratified by Nixon himself and that the green light to cross the Lao frontier on February 8 was given at the last minute by a sudden order from Washington (after *Newsweek*).

Moreover, a diversionary operation was carried out by Lao Right-wing troops in Phalane and Saravane, west and southwest of Chepone.

However, despite the secrecy about the preparation of "Lam Son 719" to create a maximum surprise, the enemy command threw itself into a battlefield which seemed, considering the subsequent unfolding of operations, to have minutely been prepared by the adversary. Since the landing of the first paratroops, there was a real wholesale slaughter of helicopters "shot down like flies" by a terribly efficacious A.A. Whole units were thus put out of action before touching the ground.

On February 11, further to the west, by a daring move, the Lao PLAF overwhelmed the Vientiane troops near Phalane, shattering, since the first days of the campaign, this front of diversion.

Starting from February 13, the blows dealt at the Saigon invaders increased in intensity, chiefly at the northern group which was completely crushed in the first days of March. The most glorious action in this sector was the carrying of Hill 456 on February 25 after a smashing attack supported by tanks, the presence of which on the battlefield had never been suspected by the enemy. A paratroop brigade had been liquidated, its colonel and general staff captured.

Beginning February 27, the southern group was in its turn taken apart. The enemy command no longer dared field the central group. It entrenched in Ban Dong, half-way between the frontier and Chepone which was, according to the set plan, to be besieged on the third day of the offensive (Feb. 10). The battle became very murderous for the puppets as the patriots' artillery and A.A. proved highly efficient with their extremely accurate fire and the inexhaustible quantity of munitions used. With the presence on those places of this mass of heavy material (artillery and armoured vehicles) and their positions which made instant shelling possible at any target in this region, it was obvious that the enemy fell into a fatal trap.

The puppets then applied the "leap frog" tactics. They dropped whole regiments on the inaccessible peaks and turned bare hills into artillery positions with bulldozers brought in by helicopters. Thus, they succeeded in setting up a chain of positions in the direction of Chepone. These positions on the one hand protected the enemy defence system on the southern flank, and on the other gave an impression of an advance to

Chepone, blotting out the image of a very ominous bog. Besides, on March 6, Thieu himself announced the seizure of this town and declared that the objective had already been attained in an attempt at concealing the failure of the operation.

But the Lao PLA were resolved not to let the enemy escape. The "bolts" set up on the hill-tops were captured one after another by the infantry with artillery support. The first great disaster suffered by the puppets in this field was the fall of position "Lollo", on hill 723 on March 16: 5 battalions including one of artillery annihilated, 1,000 men killed or wounded, 200 others taken prisoner.

On March 20, after a three-day attack, the Ban Dong entrenched camp where the bulk of the Saigon forces concentrated, was destroyed with tank support: an armoured brigade, a paratroop brigade and four artillery battalions wiped out, 200 lorries and armoured vehicles, 22 heavy guns and mortars destroyed or seized, 80 aircraft shot down, 2 helicopters taken intact by the Lao patriots. The same day, "Brown", the last position on the peaks also collapsed: 1,500 puppet troops killed or wounded, 250 others taken prisoner, 90 helicopters downed or damaged, 450 weapons seized.

Thus began a disorderly retreat, a general stampede of what remained of the 20,000 Thieu elite troops sent to Laos. The Western press mentioned striking scenes of this rout, the most typical of which was that of Saigon soldiers clutching to the skids of US helicopters coming to their rescue, rendering the flight very dangerous, even impossible. The American crew had to

crush their fingers with their nailed shoes to get them loose and then plaster the "seizable" parts of the choppers with grease as a measure of precaution.

On the whole, after 43 days of extremely bitter fighting, the patriotic forces had wiped out the "Special Mission Armoured Brigade", one marine brigade, two regiments of the First Infantry Division, two ranger battalions and eight artillery battalions. They killed or wounded 15,400 enemy troops (including 200 GIs) and captured 1,000 others among them many officers (a colonel). Nearly 500 airplanes and helicopters were downed, destroyed, damaged or seized intact, about 500 military vehicles (including 300 tanks and armoured vehicles), nearly 150 heavy guns and mortars and a great quantity of fire-arms, munitions and military equipment destroyed or seized in Lao territory.

Meanwhile, the South Vietnamese PLAF attacked the staging base of Northern Quang Tri, a direct rear of "Lam Son 719". All enemy logistic bases like Quang Tri, Ai Tu, Dong Ha, Sa Muu (*Vandergrift*), Khe Sanh, Ta Con, Lang Vay, etc. as well as artillery bases like Con Tien, Hill 241 (*Camp Carroll*), Tan Lam (*Rockpile*), Ta Con, Ta Puc, Lao Bao, etc, were often attacked for several times. Ta Con airfield (*Khe Sanh base*) came under a sudden attack on March 23: 18 depots, 40 helicopters and 18 military vehicles destroyed. Land and river communications also suffered great losses caused by great ambushes laid on Road 9 and the Cua Viet river.

The battle-count of the greatest counter-offensive launched by the US command in 1971 (and the Indochina

war as well) marked by two campaigns "Lam Son 719" and "Dewey Cayon 2" was disastrous: 23,000 men killed, wounded or captured, i. e. 50 per cent of the effectives engaged (1), 730 aircraft brought down or destroyed, most of them helicopters, 14,000 military vehicles (including 550 tanks and armoured cars) and 200 artillery pieces destroyed or seized, 40 vessels and barges sunk or set afire, and 40 logistic depots set ablaze.

The second counter-offensive to test the Saigon troops was codenamed "TOAN THANG 1-71", launched almost simultaneously with "Lam Son 719" (Feb. 4), in the Krek Suong-Chhlong-Snuol quadrilateral, north-east of Cambodia and north of the "Hook" region. Abrams sent there five tactical groups of infantry and rangers, three regiments of armoured cavalry and seven artillery battalions — 20,000 men in all — supported by the US First Air Brigade.

The military objectives were to destroy the Khmer patriots' bases in this quadrilateral up to Kratie, relieve the other fronts in Cambodia where Lon Nol's troops were losing breath, release Road 7 as far as Kompong Cham where Lon Nol's important forces had been besieged, and create a diversionary front for the Lower Laos campaign.

(1) Toward late February, reinforcements were sent to other regions of South Viet Nam to fill the vacuum on the Khe Sanh - Ban Dong front, bringing the total of pro-US forces engaged in the battle to 45,000.

Nevertheless, like on the Chepone front, this plan was foiled by the resistants and the enemy disposition sank in quicksands in the regions of Damber-Watt Thmey and Snuol. The losses inflicted on the Saigon invaders were very heavy. After the first thirty days of the campaign, they suffered 10,000 men killed, wounded or taken prisoner, and a great quantity of weapons, munitions and war material destroyed or seized by the Khmer NLAF.

The enemy forces were driven back to Road 7 and Snuol where they entrenched, seeking by all means to avoid adverse coups.

Yet, in late May, they were dealt a finishing blow at Snuol. Coming under a sudden and lightning attack, the whole garrison comprising an armoured cavalry regiment and an infantry tactical group were wiped out in spite of massive US air intervention. A small fraction escaped toward South Viet Nam but was intercepted by NFL forces and annihilated in the Loc Ninh region. All told 1,500 Saigon puppets had been killed or wounded, 300 others captured, 200 lorries and armoured cars destroyed or seized at Snuol on May 30. The same scenes of panic in Ban Dong two months earlier had also been described by the journalists: a strong column of intact armoured vehicles abandoned by their occupants who preferred cutting across the jungle to escape, human clusters clutching to helicopter skids, etc.

With the disasters of Operations "Lam Son 719" and "Toan Thang 1-71", the Saigon regular army, the main-force units of the puppet forces in Indochina,

proved hopelessly unfit for use. Considering the importance of the role played in the war by main-force units, it was obvious that the blows dealt in Lower Laos and Northeast Cambodia by the Indochinese patriots tolled the knell of the "Nixon doctrine" and the "Vietnamized" war for the Americans.

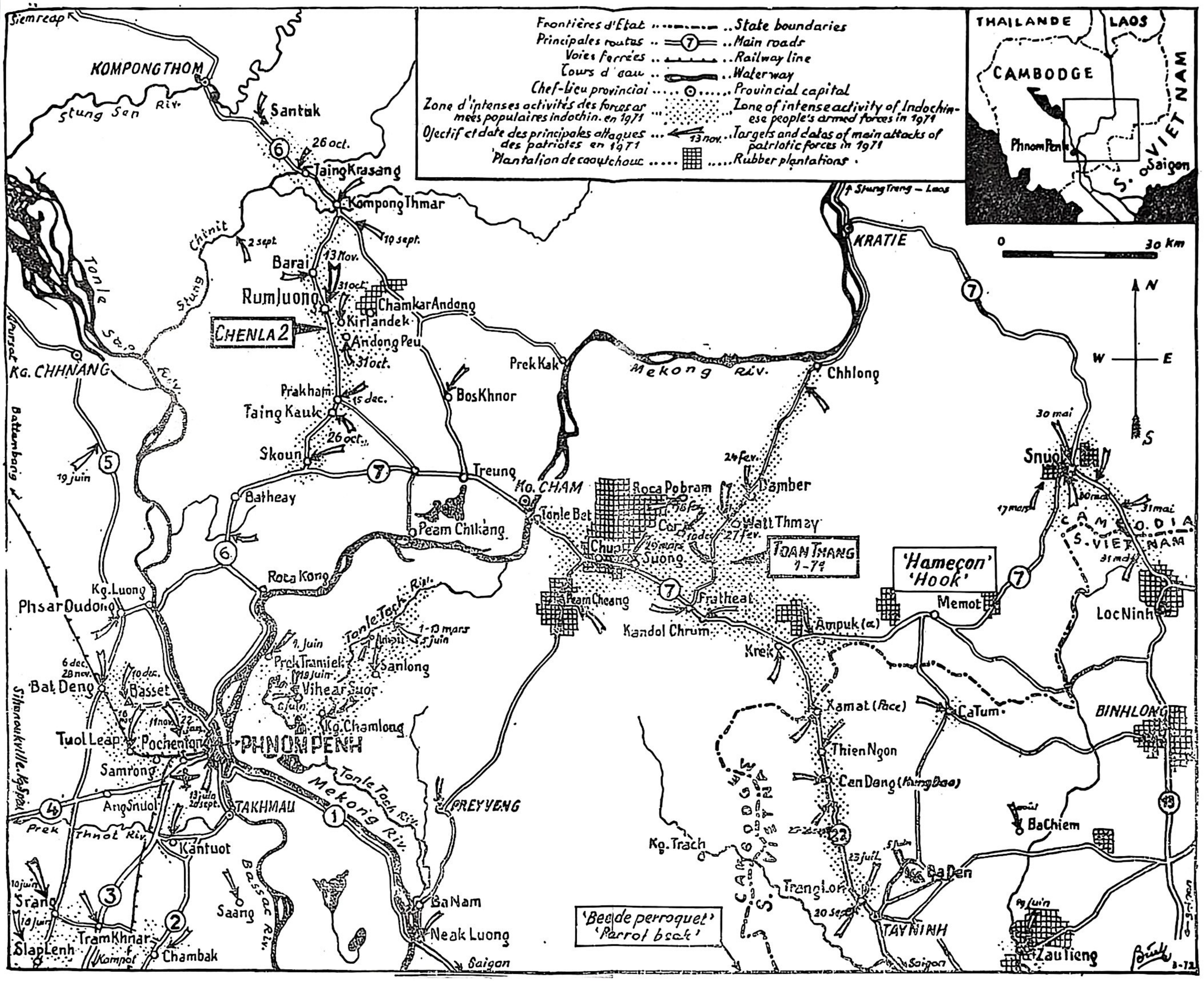
Failure of "Khmerization" and the "Special War" in Laos

In Cambodia

Starting from the second half of 1970, the Cambodian puppet army was increased five-fold but suffered a lack of training and a shortage of competent cadres. It was decimated on all sectors, especially on Road 4 between Sihanoukville and Kompong Speu, around Phnom Penh as well as in the arms of the Mekong, below the Cambodian capital.

In 1971, Lon Nol's forces were encircled in the regions surrounding the main towns, cut off and subjected to continual attacks by the Khmer NLAF. The patriots had scored brilliant feats. Besides the victories over the Saigon invaders, foiling Operation "Toan Thang 1-71", other annihilation battles were launched against the Phnom Penh puppets in the regions of the Tonle Tauch river, Pich Nil pass, Srang, Slap Lenh, Tuol Leap, Bat Deng, Toukmeas, Kompong Cham, etc. The attacks against enemy bases in the Phnom Penh region were particularly successful and worthy of admiration. Thus, the quasi-totality of Lon Nol's air forces were

Operations in the northeast, north and around Phnom Penh in 1971, "Toan Thang I-1971" and "Chenla 2"



destroyed on the ground at Pochentong airfield on January 22, the greatest munition depots of the country in the olympic stadium and village near the capital were blown up on June 13; the most important fuel depots situated on the northern outskirts of Phnom Penh were set afire on November 11, etc.

Like in Viet Nam the time had come to put the Khmer puppets to test, the more so as the impotence of the Saigon forces as spearhead in all the Indochinese theatres of operations was evident after "Lam Son 719" and "Toan Thang 1-71". Therefore, on August 20, after minute preparations supervised on the spot by Nixon's emissaries (1), Operation "Chenla 2" was mounted along the axis of Road 6 linking Phnom Penh to the provinces situated north of the Great Lakes Tonle Sap. Lon Nol threw into the battle 20,000 picked troops, composed chiefly of Khmer Krom, armoured vehicles and battalions especially formed long since in South Viet Nam by the US command. The enemy wanted to relieve 70 kilometres of the road section between Taingkauk and Kompong Thom, cut off a main communication line of the Khmer NLAF, destroy supply stocks and units supposed to be stationed in this region. Planned without the direct participation of Saigon troops (2) and benefiting by intensive US air

1) Including British expert Robert Thompson, Nixon's special adviser in "pacification", Admiral Mc Cain, Commander in Chief of the US forces in the Pacific.

2) A diversionary operation was however mounted on Road 7 between Krek and Kompong Cham by Saigon troops to threaten the rears of the Khmer NLAF which tried to launch

. . .

support including B.52s, "Chenla 2" was a test for the application of the "Nixon doctrine" in Cambodia.

Lon Nol's troops only engaged in sporadic combats in the first weeks of the operation. It seemed that the patriots were content with observing them and letting their defence system spread at will. The enemy occupied several localities but saw the road immediately cut off before and behind them, thus turning them into islands. Communications were not ensured and often impossible, supplies became very difficult and depended on aviation but the adverse A.A. became ever more efficient. Two flanking thrusts in support of "Chenla 2" were rapidly broken, one on the Stung Chinit river where a fluvial flotilla and barges carrying troops were sunk in late September, and the other at Bos Khnor, on an axis parallel to Road 6. Beginning October the blows of the Khmer NLAF redoudled in intensity, annihilating entire adverse units at each battle. The decisive battle was launched in the Rum Luong region on the night of November 12: the Lon Nol 46th Brigade was completely wiped out. Pursuing the enemy who tried to withdraw from the strings of positions built at great expenses, the patriots turned this retreat into a spectacular disorder. An *AP* correspondent cabled from the battlefield on December 4:

"General Hu Hang Xin, Commander-in-Chief of the operation is now busy counting those who have escaped

an attack from the east on the section of Road 6. But did not have any effect on "Chenla 2" campaign and led a complete defeat in Damber region on December 12.

from Kompong Thmar and Baray. A great number of soldiers go bare foot and some among them without guns. Most of them bear obvious signs of defeat."

In about one hundred days, "Chenla 2" had cost the pro-American troops 12,000 men killed, wounded or captured, 30 battalions out of the 70 involved in the operation wiped out or decimated and an important quantity of arms, military material and equipment seized or destroyed. Lon Nol himself had to order a general withdrawal to the starting points.

In Laos

While concentrating their blows on the Saigon puppets' invasion of Road 9 ("Lam Son 719") the Lao PLAF kept the initiative in other parts of the country.

In Upper Laos, in the Pak Hou region, north of Luang Prabang, they launched a four-day offensive (March 21 to 23) which cost the right-wing forces 400 men killed or wounded. Further south, from April to June, they seriously threatened the Vang Pao HQ at Long Cheng, liberating Ban Na, on the south-west border of the Plain of Jars in early April. The following month, the Bolovens Plateau, a platform dominating the whole Lower Laos and Northeast Cambodia, was liberated by the patriots who laid hands on Paksong and Houei Sai towns. On Road 9 they advanced as far as Dong Hene, sixty kilometres from Savannakhet.

In the beginning of the rainy season, the pro-American forces launched in late June 49 battalions (three Vang Pao mobile brigades and ten Thai battalions)

against the Plain of Jars. Strong positions in the centre of this region of strategic importance were arranged.

The US command adopted a new defence system. The Thai troops promoted to the role of main force established themselves in fortified bolts with powerful artillery and casemates made of sandbags and prefab concrete. Around each bolt operated mobile units of Vang Pao "special forces" well acquainted with the place, serving as a protection belt. These bolts set up in judiciously chosen peaks formed a string laying out in depth, constituting three stopping lines from Ban Ang airfield to the centre of the region as far as Long Cheng (about 30 kilometres further southwest) and prolonging toward Vang Vieng on Road 13.

US aviation based near there and in Thailand provided the right-wing forces with maximum support. The garrisons and their protection forces could fall back to the neighbouring positions if they could not carry on the fight for the air force and artillery to decimate the adversary and then wrest back the lost position ("elastic and organized withdrawal" tactic). Things seemed to go smoothly for the pro-American forces which had taken precautions to confront the dry season.

But on December 18, unaware of the enemy, the Lao PLAF launched a sudden attack with the participation of tanks in the centre of the Plain of Jars and in many other adjacent sectors. The unexpected coming into play of a considerable and powerful A.A. was an unpleasant surprise for the enemy, just like the date of offensive which was nearly two months ahead according to the US staff's reckoning.

The attack was so fierce that all the central positions of the Plain of Jars and many others in the direction of Road 13 were taken by storm within sixty hours. A mobile brigade of Vang Pao "special forces" and seven Thai battalions were wiped out, a second mobile brigade and the remaining three Thai battalions decimated. On the whole, 3,300 enemy troops were killed, injured or captured, 17 airplanes and helicopters downed, a great quantity of arms and equipment, among them 30 artillery pieces and 20 military vehicles seized or destroyed.

Pursuing the remaining enemy troops who were retreating toward the southwest, the Lao PLAF carried the war to the second stopping line and even to the gates of Long Cheng (from December 31, 1971 to January 12, 1972). In the western direction, after the liberation of Muong Soui, it was the turn of Sala Phukhoun, an important cross-roads of Roads 7 and 13. Then developing their offensives in two opposite directions the patriots reached Kieou Kacham and Muong Kassy in January, controlling a section of more than sixty kilometres on an important thoroughfare linking Vientiane to Luang Prabang.

In the southwest of the Plain of Jars, the positions defending the trails leading to Long Cheng were captured one after another by the patriots. On January 10 Sam Thong town was liberated and on January 12, the enemy was driven out of their Long Cheng HQ, the greatest US base in Laos, losing at least a thousand men within a week. All the remote defence system of Vientiane was thus overwhelmed and the pro-American

circles in Vientiane and even in Bangkok were thrown in confusion.

The reverse sustained in the Plain of Jars showed that the two strategic forces used by the USA in Laos, i. e. the Vang Pao forces and Thai troops were incapable of bringing victory to the Asianized "special war" in this country. They proved the inefficiency of the newly-adopted tactics, "powerful bolts protected by a belt of mobile defence", "elastic and organized withdrawal", etc. US "fire-power" once more proved inoperative in supporting the ground troops, even on a bare terrain where aviation ought to produce maximum effect. On this occasion the Western press described scenes of entire columns of lorries carrying troops and tanks rolling in broad daylight on grassland in pursuit of the receding troops despite US airplanes flying overhead.

Attempts at encroachment by 30 Right-wing battalions and five Thai battalions carried out in the rainy season on the Bolovens Plateau did not bring better results. Beginning December 6, the Lao PLAF launched vigorous counter-attacks throughout Lower Laos. Important towns such as Saravane, Thateng, Paksong were successively liberated again. On January 11, 1972 the enemy were completely driven out of the Bolovens Plateau and the region of Road 23 as far as Ban Nhik, east of Pakse. During those seven weeks the losses of the pro-American forces in Lower Laos were as follows: 1,800 men killed or wounded, 100 others taken prisoner, 500 weapons including 50 heavy guns and mortars destroyed or seized by the patriots.

Enemy defence network shaken, the forces in support of "pacification" attacked

In the most threatened sectors, the US command in South Viet Nam had set up fortified defence lines supported by powerful artillery positions and planted ultra-modern detection devices on hilly land.

In 1971, those lines came under fierce and repeated attacks and suffered heavy losses.

The defence network established south of the demilitarized zone of the 17th parallel was put to hard trial. From June to August, the strong points of Dong Tri, Ba Ho, Ba Tum, Dong Che, and chiefly Hill 544 called "base Fuller" by the Americans, were assaulted. Whole US and puppet battalions were wiped out, and electronic material of detection and ranging destroyed or seized by the PLAF in those attacks.

Southwest of Hue, the enemy defence was shaken in May and June at Ta Luong and A Tay. So were the positions defending the coastal strip between Da Nang and Quang Ngai when the patriots assailed "Mary Ann" base at Xa Doc on March 28, causing the heaviest losses to the Americans in the last years, and "Hoang Anh" base at Nui Dau on April 24, annihilating a puppet battalion.

The patriots also battered the enemy defence along the frontier in the Kontum-Dak To region on the High Plateau, in Ngoc To Ba and Ngoc Rinh Rua mountain ranges where fire bases No 6 and No 5 came under attack in March and June. The command of the

Saigon 2nd Military Region had to bring in all its mobile reserve which was later on annihilated or decimated. More than one thousand puppet soldiers and many US "advisers" were killed, wounded or taken prisoner on this front.

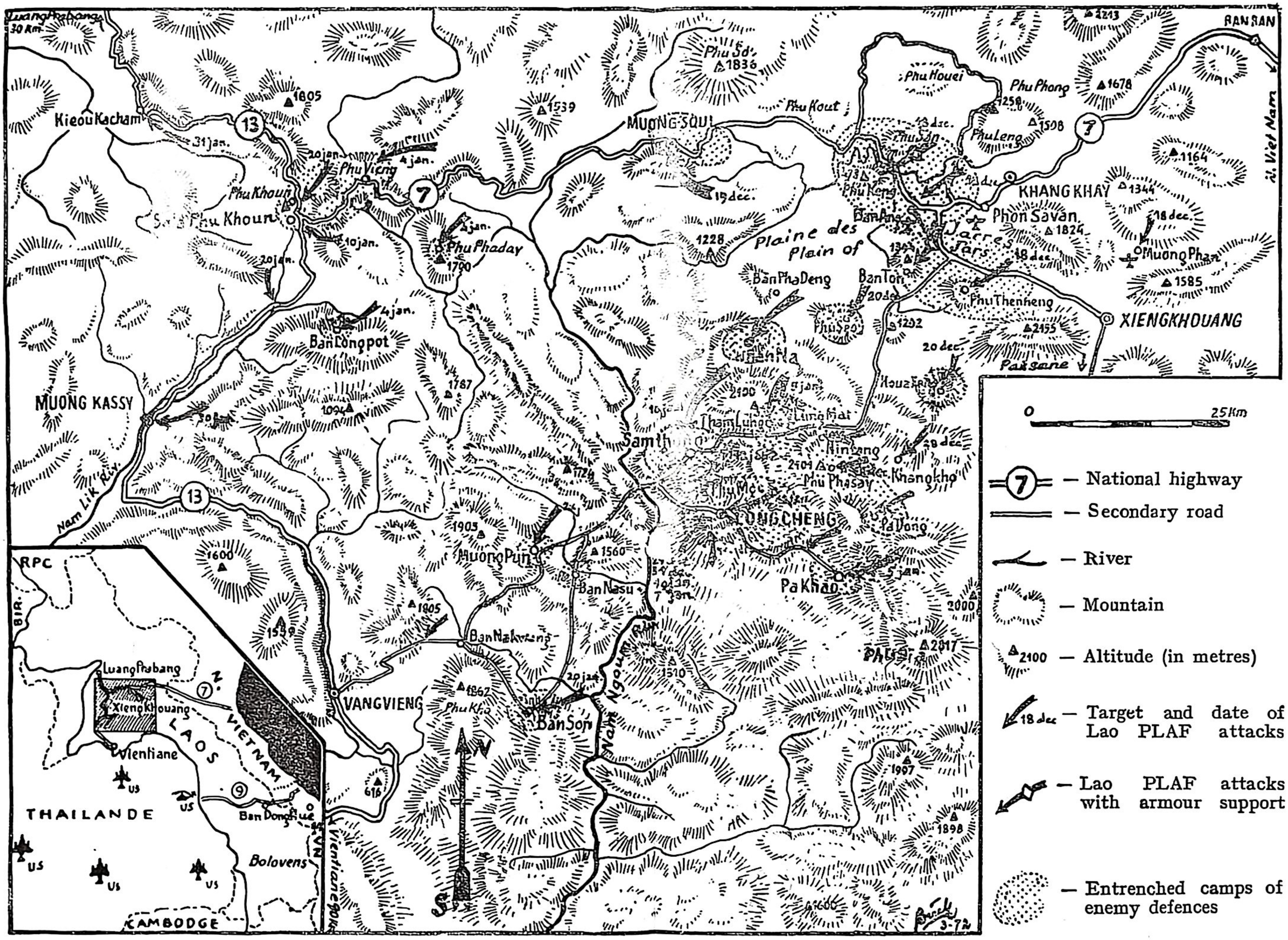
The security belt of Saigon region was badly shaken at the Tay Ninh side from late May to September, despite operations "Toan Thang" in the northeastern Cambodia boundary, the aim of which had been to keep this sector as far as possible from the revolutionary forces' ouslaughts.

So was the case of Cambodia. The patriots smashed the defence of Phnom Penh, at Toul Leap and Bat Deng in November (northwest) and at Slap Lenh in June (east).

In Laos, the breakdown of the defence system of the Plain of Jars protecting Northeast Vientiane and that of the Bolovens Plateau defending East Pakse were other examples. Thus, the enemy rear bases were much exposed, and in 1971 the patriotic forces of the three Indochinese peoples won magnificent exploits in attacking enemy rears, HQs, military bases, logistic bases, airfields, etc.

In South Viet Nam, Da Nang, "the greatest US base in Southeast Asia" came under attack in February, June, August and September. On June 30, the great logistic base of Deo Son, near Quy Nhon, suffered the sixth assault this year: 50,000 tons of munitions, and six million litres of fuel were destroyed since January 7. Within twenty minutes, a surprise onslaught against a

Lao PLAF offensives in the Plain of Jars in December 1971 and January 1972



military training centre near Nha Trang made 500 killed or wounded among the teachers and students on April 25. O Vung, one of the greatest fuel depots in Indochina situated in the perimeter of the US base in Cam Ranh was set afire on May 23: 45 million litres of gasoline went up in flames. Three months later, again in Cam Ranh, 32 warehouses containing 50,000 tons of bombs and shells were completely wiped out by the patriotic forces.

The HQs and rear bases of Saigon big units also withstood daring and murderous attacks. At Song Mao, the base of the 44th Regiment, 200 kilometres east-north-east of Saigon was assailed on March 2 and complely destroyed: 500 puppet officers and numerous US "advisers" killed, wounded or captured. Other bases in the Saigon region suffered the same fate: Zau Tieng, the base of the 49th Regiment (400 men killed or wounded on June 19), Trang Son, HQ of the 18th Division (200 men killed or wounded on June 23, 600 others killed or wounded, 100 military vehicles destroyed on September 20), Lai Khe, HQ of the 5th Division (400 men slain or injured on December 28), etc. In Tay Ninh region the depots of Ka Tum and Thien Ngon were repeatedly attacked all through the year.

As regards "pacification" which was like a Sisyphean task, the Western press admitted its poor results. A US high-ranking adviser stressed that the "Viet Cong infrastructure" had not seriously been touched. Thus the final objective of this strategic task had not been attained. For the brutality of the means and methods

used, it was far from "winning the mind and heart of the people". (1)

The forces involved in this campaign sustained very severe reverses. The revolutionary armed forces liquidated or neutralized tens of agents of the coercive apparatus set up in the country (2).

The military forces in charge of "pacification", scattered throughout the country, constituted major targets for the guerillas. Every day the latter launched tens of engagements, which were most often of small scale and ignored in the communiques. But the reverses suffered represented a no small danger to the adversary, just like a diffused haemorrhage to the health of a sick man.

The struggle against "pacification" was not only spreading. Veritable campaigns were launched by the PLAF, the most important of which were on the High Plateaux and in the Mekong river delta.

The hottest spot on the Highlands was in the southern part, around Phu Nhon district centre, specially in the period between March and June. In three months, more than 1,500 puppets including 500 men of the regular 45th Regiment were eliminated in this sector.

The biggest "pacification" operation was launched against the U Minh jungle, near the southernmost point of the Indochinese peninsula, an impregnable base of the revolution set up since a quarter of century. It lasted

1. See the article "The US-Thieu Regime".

2. Those agents were mentioned in Saigon communiqués under the hypocrite name of "civilians" killed or kidnapped by the "terrorists".

from December 1970 to the end of November 1971. After a most bitter struggle, the enemy command had to end the operation which cost him 16,000 men killed, wounded or captured (among them 600 GIs), 160 planes and helicopters brought down or wrecked, 180 motor launches and vessels sunk or set afire, 80 artillery pieces seized or destroyed. The people had succeeded not only in resisting the attempt at concentrating them into herding zones, but also in dismantling 60 camps.

One of the characteristics of the armed struggle against pacification was the people's uprisings, a form of combined political and military struggle. Those uprisings, launched in more or less large regions, dismantled in a short time the coercive apparatus patiently set up by the adversary. they showed how enemy efforts were risky and explained the pessimism reigning among the clear-headed fraction of Saigon and Washington leading circles.

Thus, in the course of the first week of February, in the coastal provinces of Central Trung Bo, between Da Nang and Cam Ranh, the patriots attacked 16 urban centres, six airbases (including Da Nang, Nha Trang, and Cam Ranh), two US bases (Chu Lai and Cam Ranh), a US divisional HQ, three regimental CPs: at least 2,000 Americans and puppets were put out of action and 23 military posts razed.

On March 29, a wave of uprisings was launched in Duc Zúc, a district centre 40 kilometres from Da Nang. Until April 8, the revolutionary forces successfully withstood the enemy attempts at returning to these places and dismantled all the "strategic hamlets" on a 30

sq.km area. At least, 2,000 puppets were put out of action. A month later, in the adjacent district of Dai Loc, within a week (from May 1 to 7), the guerillas wiped out 16 military posts and more than 800 enemy troops, breaking the puppets' military and administrative apparatus in the whole region. In the last five days of August, in Thang Binh district, east of Dai Loc, the guerillas waged a "counter-pacification" operation, killing, wounding or capturing 370 enemy troops, making it possible for 1,500 inhabitants to leave the herding zones.

Prospects for 1972

The setbacks suffered by Washington in Indochina on the military plane in 1971 bear a crucial importance upon the ulterior development of the war.

The puppet troops have become the main strategic force on the battlefield. But in what state are they?

The Lao "royal" army of the Vientiane Rightists is since long impotent. The Vang Pao troops have suffered serious and irretrievable losses (1). The Thai troops have proved to be poor "sappers", drawing the contempt of their Lao "allies". Moreover, the Bangkok dictators have also to settle their own affairs with the Thai revolution. Washington will not be able easily to

(1) Among the hundreds of prisoners captured in the Plain of Jars by the Lao PLA, many Vang Pao soldiers are 15 or 16-year-old children. This shows that the Meo tribes controlled by the adventurer general run low in manpower.

build up a Thai "expeditionary corps" capable of giving a good account of itself in Indochina.

Lon Nol's "republican" army has indeed been increased tenfold. But set up in haste, without an ideal, without traditions and fighting experience, isolated in a nation hostile to it, demoralized by disasters, by the embezzlement and incapacity of the political and military chiefs, it would not be useful to the US strategy.

In a word, in Laos and Cambodia, the revolutionary and patriotic forces maintain an obvious superiority over the enemy, particularly on the military plane.

In South Viet Nam, the main US-puppet force lies in the existing 13 divisions which constitute the core of some 800,000 men under arms. In the first place, scattered throughout the territory, they are in a defensive posture. After the 1971 setbacks, they are wont to avoid fresh reverses and prevent the situation from worsening in 1972. Strategic reserves are few and poor.

Then, like in Cambodia, the quality of the puppet soldier is poor. Despite a great effort in the "*don quan*" system, all the regular divisions are under strength. Most of the men are newly "promoted", coming from units of lower category and having not the required qualities for their new roles. As in the large-scale operations of the past year, most of them must assume functions superior to their grades. The same state of things exists, to a higher degree, in the regional troops, militia and "civilian defence",

In the third place, as none of them had escaped the blows dealt by the PLAF last year, the puppet divisions have lost the great part of their most seasoned and reactionary elements. Particularly heavy were the losses in the ranks of the mobile units of the strategic general reserve: one wonders, even if they could be restored, whether these units can become again what they were previously.

In the fourth place, given the sweeping draft which took place in South Viet Nam, the puppet armed forces are all the more heterogeneous. What could one expect of an "anti-government" student or a recalcitrant peasant forcibly or disciplinarily recruited, if not a desertion at the first opportunity, or even a crossing over to the revolutionary ranks with lock, stock and barrel? It amounts to saying that the puppet armed forces, used to be the godsend key for the US neo-colonialist enterprise in Indochina, have all the chances to become a delayed-action bomb.

At last, it should be reminded that since 1965 the US expeditionary corps has always served as a prop and a shield for the puppet armed forces. Now that centrepiece was suddenly withdrawn by the irreversible process of repatriation. One therefore understands why they were so rapidly shattered in 1971 and 1972.

Only the aviation was suddenly reinforced in early March 1972 (1). But the lessons drawn from the war

(1) After *UPI* (March 3), the number of US tactical bombers has gone from 400 to 500 aircraft and that of strategical bombers (B. 52) operating in Indochina from 45 to 90 early in March.

have clearly shown that the air arm is far from being decisive, especially in a war against a united people determined to defend their independence and freedom.

As regards armament and equipment, the US-puppet forces at the beginning of 1972 are inferior to those at the end of 1970. The new tactics worked out by their general staff have failed one after the other on the battlefield.

The enemy's rear has proved none too firm despite certain fallacious signs which the US-puppet responsables like to boast of so as to make believe a success of "Vietnamization". The political and economic events in 1971 (one-man election, repression of the opposition, economic depression, etc.) as well as the increasing attraction of the NFL watchwords among the population of the occupied zones have added up to the fragility of the enemy's rear.

On the other hand, the fighting forces of the three Indochinese peoples are stronger and more seasoned, and their co-operation and mutual aid more fraternal than ever. The liberated zones constitute a vast territory lying at one stretch from the border with China to the gates of Phnom Penh and to the defence perimeter around Saigon. The world support and assistance to the patriotic struggle of the Vietnamese, Lao and Khmer peoples are more considerable than ever.

Of course, US imperialism and its present representative, Nixon, will not easily resign themselves to defeat. But the means at their disposal, whatever cruel they may be, will not be able to reverse the course of events. The political climate in the USA and

in the world makes a new massive rush of GIs into Indochina quasi-unconceivable, especially in this election year. The US satellite countries still keep a bitter memory of their participation in the US aggression. They will undoubtedly offer a stronger resistance than in 1965 to the US plea to supply new contingents.

The Pentagon may step up the bombing. But for a people who have so far come out the victor despite a quantity of bombs and shells double that used in the Second World War (13 million tons in ten years), a new move of the aggressors will but aggravate their defeat. Nixon, Melvin Laird, and their generals and admirals have threatened to re-escalate the war in North Viet Nam and realized these threats several times, for instance, in March, November, and December 1971. But it is difficult for them to reach the scope of the 1966-1968 raids which nonetheless failed to bring victory to the US camp. Moreover, the DRVN defence, always vigilant, had given them a stern rebuff, especially late in December, between two great festivals — Christmas and New Year — downing 15 jet fighters-bombers in five days.

The military situation is thus clearly unfavourable to US imperialism. The balance of forces swings more clearly than early in February in favour of the Indochinese resistance which meets the New Year with a firm certitude in the final victory of its just cause: independence, freedom and the right of each people to settle their own affairs.

The US-Thieu Regime

NKV and HN

Upon the stability and firmness of the puppet regime established in Saigon, with the mercenary Nguyen Van Thieu at its head, rests the future of the US neo-colonialist policy in Viet Nam. Therefore, to consolidate and strengthen the Saigon regime becomes the main concern of the Nixon administration, compelled to give up its big military offensives against the revolutionary forces. What matters is to clamp upon the South Vietnamese population by political manoeuvres and especially by a policy of terror, a coercive apparatus which would indefinitely keep the country in the US orbit. The two major tasks of this policy consist in:

— "pacifying" the countryside, breaking all show of resistance, all mark of patriotic organization, and making all life impossible wherever this resistance is too strong;

— driving millions of people to a forced exodus to the cities and submitting the entire urban population to a draconian control so as to efficaciously serve the "Vietnamization" of the war.

Thus the struggle of the population has developed on these two fronts : counter-pacification and opposition in the cities.

Pacification and Counter-pacification

" To pacify " the countryside, to forcibly submit the peasant masses, deeply patriotic and firmly organized on the revolutionray plane, to the will of Washington, and to this end to resort to most barbarous means, such has always been the US policy in South Viet Nam since 1954. Continued raids, mass massacres, murders, burning of villages, deportation, concentration of people, destruction of crops, never since 18 years has the South Vietnamese rural population known a day of peace.

Nixon has done nothing but to continue this policy in greatly aggravating it, for he knows that he plays, so as to say, his last card, the massive intervention of GIs having proved inefficient. Now Nixon carries out this policy with much more, powerful technological means than his predecessors with a richer experience drawn over the years by the US services. Nixon has also enlisted the help of the British Robert Thompson who had applied for many years an extremely barbarous policy of pacification against the Malay people.

If the pacification of the countryside had always been inscribed in Washington neo-colonialist programs in South Viet Nam since 1954, it has become under Nixon the main component. It now gets a long-term task;

while Kennedy thought to pacify the country in 18 months in 1961, Johnson in two years, Nixon thinks in terms of 10, 15 years relying mainly on the exhaustment of the population, crushed by unprecedented massacres and destructions. To this effect, he allocates billions of dollars, a figure supposedly acceptable by US opinion for it is still a far cry from the 30 billion required each year by the massive intervention of GIs in 1965-1969. With the blood of Asian mercenaries and a few billion each year, Washington hopes to indefinitely carry on the war and eventually make the Vietnammese people capitulate.

To fulfil this program, a double US-puppet apparatus is set up at the national and local level. According to a report by William Colby, in charge of pacification before the US Senate (February 17, 1970) the CORDS (Civil Operation And Rural Development Support) which directs all the military civilian and economic aid tasks—in collaboration with USAID—and propaganda tasks—in collaboration with USIS—relating to pacification, functions under the direct command of General Abrams, Commander-in-Chief of the Expeditionary Corps. Its personnel amounts to 6,457 militarymen, including 2,427 US officers and 948 US civilians; moreover, it enlists 7,600 Vietnamese and 188 people of other nationalities. In 25 provinces of South Viet Nam, a US senior officer is assigned as adviser to pacification and a US civilian as his deputy. In other 19 provinces, and big towns, a US civilian from the US embassy is adviser, seconded by a militaryman. In 190 districts, a US officer is adviser while his deputy is a US civilian.

At the echelon of the district, there functions a CORDS team of eight members, at the echelon of the province, a team of 30-70 and at the echelon of each tactical area, a team of 150. In Saigon, the CORDS has a personnel of 600. From the US side, one has also to mention the special groups, the mobile advisory teams (MAT), the combined action platoons (CAP), which train the puppet forces operating with them. When the puppet forces are sufficiently trained, the US teams leave them to train others. At present, there are MAT with a personnel of 1985 and 14 CAP with 2,000 marines. In 1970, the CORDS spent 1,518 million dollars,

The puppet pacification apparatus is directed by a Central Pacification and Development Council with Nguyen Van Thieu himself as president, the chief of General Staff and the Director General of the Police among its members. The pacification forces comprise the regional forces, the "popular forces", the "people's self-defence forces", the national police and the Phoenix teams. One can distinguish two main categories among these forces:

— a hard "core", militarymen and policemen, specially trained and indoctrinated groups, able to carry out military operations, collective or individual terrorist acts—massacres, murders, tortures—to wage demagogic or intimidation manoeuvres.

— a mass of people who once drafted and dominated by the "core", are compelled to do all tasks of control and coercion against the population, of fighting against

the revolutionary forces. The entire able-bodied population would thus be put at the service of the neo-colonialist policy.

A particular mention must be made of the Phoenix teams, recruited among the most reactionary elements, the adventurers and the hooligans, and trained to murder, torture, sabotage and intelligence operations. All these puppet forces operate under the immediate command of the CIA which has 450 advisers at the provincial and district levels (44 provinces and 242 districts), 800 puppet pacification teams grouping 44,000 agents work under the direction of 7,000 US advisers. In 1970-1971, 50 per cent of the operations waged by the US ground forces, 80 per cent of those carried out by the puppets have pacification purposes. The police has seen its strength increased to 150,000 which will be brought to 163,000 in 1972. According to Colby's report, in 1969, 2,862 village heads, 8,532 hamlet chiefs and many other agents, 30,000 in all, have followed training and indoctrination courses for pacification in specialized centres.

In an interview given to AFP, Colby boasts to have recruited 500,000 people in the regional forces and village militia, equipped them with M.16 and drafted two million people into "popular forces". On September 5, 1970, Ngo Khac Tinh, the Saigon minister of information, stated that the latter would be brought to 5 million. On May 1, 1971 Nixon put forward a plan costing one billion dollars to draft 4 million. The aim is clear: to compel the population against its will to fight the revolutionary forces.

Hereunder is the repartition of tasks between the different categories:

— the village, local armed forces control the population, seek to neutralize the guerillas' actions and check all infiltration of revolutionary elements into the villages.

— the special teams have to detect the activists, revolutionary organizations and sympathizers, and try to liquidate them by murder, to extort military and political intelligence by torture and threat. All the information obtained is centralized by a specialized body, the DIOC, which is exclusively composed of Americans and works at the district echelon.

— the regular forces help the pacification teams in launching long-term sweeps, trying to destroy the revolutionary bases and wipe out the liberation armed forces.

In each village is set up a military post with many blockhouses held by a mobile platoon of militia, supported by one or several platoons of "combat youth", a squad of armed police, and a brigade of self-defence popular forces grouping several hundred inhabitants. A puppet administrative and political apparatus looks after civilian affairs, while the population is compelled to establish inter-family groups so as to enable a direct control by the agents of the power put at the head of these bodies.

Along with these coercive and terrorist operations, the American services are feverishly active in the economic and propaganda field. They seek to dump

the occupied villages with luxury goods, and distribute machines, fertilizer and seeds to a certain number of peasants. Thus, the population becomes completely dependent upon American supplies. Day after day, the cinema, television, radio and newspapers try to dissolve all notion of patriotism and human dignity, and inculcate upon everybody a raving thirst for pleasure, resignation and naturally anti-communism. The American services go the length of using young women, the swans — in opposition to the Phoenix — to seduce and corrupt the revolutionary activists and subvert their organizations. High bonuses, up to 11,000 dollars, are offered to anyone giving information on resistance organizations.

How does the "pacification" work?

In the framework of a fierce war, marked by air bombings, artillery shellings and continual sprayings of chemicals, the US-Saigon troops launch long-term sweeps, trying to break by violence all attempt at resistance. Under the protection of these troops, the pacification teams enter the villages and arrest the suspects, all those alleged to have some relation with the resistance. Tortured often to death, the latter must give the required information, other people supposed to belong to revolutionary organizations are murdered. Then the population is divided in several categories to be drafted into various military and paramilitary formations. Pacification by compelling the children, their parents, the neighbours and friends to denounce one another, tortures, firings and executions often take place under the eyes of the population for intimidation

purpose. Together with these terrorist operations, pacification agents distribute a few plots of land, some agricultural machines, have a school or a market built, advise people not to think of abstract ideals, fatherland, revolution, and to resign themselves to live. With the American goods, luxury goods, corruption and the American way of life appear in the village, dissolving all will of resistance, all national feeling and all sense of human dignity.

Wherever the resistance is too strong and the population cannot be drafted and controlled on the spot, the village is razed by bulldozers, dwellings and crops alike, so as to make all life impossible. The population is embarked into helicopters and carried to refugees' camps or strategic hamlets. Pacification operations are closely linked to relocation ones, as well as to operations of war and large-scale destruction of the whole country. All this is dubbed, in the American way, campaign of rural development. Since he came to power, Nixon has ordered four successive pacification programs:

— a program of "accelerated" pacification from January 1969 to June 1969;

— a program of "rural development" from July 1969 to June 1970;

— a program of "special development" from July 1970 to February 1971, and;

— a program of "community defence" and "regional development" beginning in March 1971.

Half of the US troops and 80 per cent of the Saigon armed forces are involved in this project, and three

billion dollars have been spent. One can say that with Nixon the war loses its spectacular aspect to develop in scope and depth, and that never has the South Viet Nam population known so harsh a trial. The operations take place both in the Mekong delta and in the northern provinces, near the 17th parallel, on the High Plateaux or the coastal provinces of Binh Dinh and Phu Yen. In three years, about 60,000 operations have been launched, mustering one or several battalions each, some of them lasting a whole year like those in Quang Tin, Quang Ngai or U Minh forest (Rach Gia and Ca Mau provinces). In Quang Tin and Quang Ngai provinces, the Americal Division has massacred 4,500 people and arrested 2,700 others among the population. In the U Minh region, 5,000 civilians have been killed, 1,000 transport and fishing craft destroyed, 65,000 people forcibly relocated along Ong Doc canal, and several thousand hectares of forests set afire. In Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces, near the 17th parallel, 500 out of 870 villages have been razed, in Quang Da, 350 out of 440 levelled. Hai Lang district, Quang Tri province, which numbered 80,000 people, has been depopulated, like that of Go Noi, Quang Da province, which had 40,000. Before the US Senate, William Colby, in charge of pacification has had to admit that the number of victims of the Phoenix teams alone reaches 67,000 and Representatives O.R. Raid and Mc Closkey Jr. have declared that it constitutes a great shame in the history of the American nation.

Relocation operations have been carried out mainly in two regions, the High Plateaux and the northern

provinces. A program of massive relocation to depopulate the five northern provinces (Quang Tri, Thua Thien, Quang Nam, Quang Tin and Quang Ngai) has begun to be implemented in 1971. The population is carried further south, toward Nam Bo, so as to establish a very wide white zone where US aviation and artillery can freely go into action. The various ethnics on the High Plateaux are forcibly rooted out, removed from their hamlets and regrouped in lower villages to be step by step integrated into the mass of refugees in the plains. 68 per cent of the mountain dwellers have thus been forcibly displaced over the war years, according to an American document.

Nixon's war, to use a current expression, is essentially a war against the population. Popular resistance has successfully coped with the scope and fierceness of the war. More than ever before the strategy of people's war has been developed to fight this "special war" brought to a higher level than under Kennedy, using the global strength of military and political actions combined with an intense work of agitation and persuasion among the puppet troops. Guerilla has been closely combined with the actions of regular units, the key role being played by the local guerilla forces which cling to the terrain to decimate the adverse forces, enable the population to intensify political struggle and shift to local insurrection when the opportunity comes, shatter the enemy military, police and administrative apparatus. At the same time, the revolutionary activists have clung to their mass bases to direct the people's struggle, in spite of sacrifices and risks. The entire

population has thus been mobilized in a gigantic and multiform struggle, waged with a spirit of bold offensive.

After having ordered to lob over 6 million tons of bombs and shells, devastated hundreds of thousands of hectares of crops, and supressed all life in vast regions Nixon has indeed inflicted upon the South Viet Nam, population untold sufferings but has got none of his expected results. The revolutionary organizations have not been smashed nor uprooted from their village bases; far from being terrorized, the population wages a tenacious and heroic struggle; far from being crushed and annihilated, the guerilla forces are more active than ever. Neither the security of military bases and big cities, or that of communication means are ensured. Nixon has wanted to destroy the "Viet cong infrastructure" but to no avail, and it is the puppet apparatus, this huge military and police machinery, set up at a great cost, which has been shaken. In many villages, the latter has been wiped out while in many others the Saigon agents have been compelled to compromise with the resistance and keep an official facade behind with the revolutionary forces operate at will. When the American and Saigon services hold that 95 per cent of villages are "pacified", they include sectors when the puppet apparatus has been destroyed or wholly neutralized.

The Saigon armed forces involved in these pacification operations have suffered serious losses. In the U Minh region, for instance, within a year, the operation has cost 16,000 men, including 600 GIs, 160 planes and

helicopters, 180 motor-boats and 80 heavy guns. The massive intervention of B.52s, the large-scale destruction of forests, a real crime against nature, has not prevented the defeat of the Saigon troops. For all the efforts of the US, Saigon and South Korean troops which have displayed unheard of barbarity, the province of Binh Dinh has successfully resisted pacification and remains a "Viet Cong" province. In the Mekong delta, the number of military posts destroyed steadily increases, and many puppet village administrations prefer enter into agreement with the revolutionary forces. The Nixon will have considerably devastated and mutilated the South Viet Nam countryside, but will never succeed in "pacifying" it.

Control of towns and urban resistance

After a journey of study in Southeast Asia, Professor Noam Chomsky has come to the following conclusion on "forced-draft urbanization":

It is important to understand that the massacre of the rural population in South Viet Nam and its forced evacuation are not an accidental product of the war. Rather, it is the very essence of the US strategy. Very clear and explicit explanations have been given on the theoretical aspect of the question. Thus to Professor Samuel Huntangton the Viet Cong is a strong force which could not be separated from its agglomerate so long as "the agglomerate continues to exist". The conclusion is evident and he does not hesitate to make

it. One can guarantee that the agglomerate ceases to exist if one directly applies the mechanical and conventional power (...) to a mass scale to generate a massive emigration from the countryside to the town where the Viet Cong agglomerate, the rural population, can be probably controlled in refugees camps and slums of Saigon suburbs.

Saigon and the urban centres thus know a real demographic boom, especially since Nixon's advent to power. The population of the capital is estimated at over 4 million (1) and that of the neighbouring centres at about 4 million. Within a decade the urban population has doubled or even trebled. At the beginning of 1970, it made up, according to Gerald Hickey, author of "Village in Viet Nam", 60 per cent of the South Viet Nam population (2). Other sources give from 40 to 45 per cent.

To control the uprooted rural mass, and the urban population in general, the US-Saigon administration simultaneously uses violence, demagogy, systematic pauperization and corruption, displaying a huge panoply of political, economic, social and cultural weapons.

The regime shows a fascist face that no demagogic powder can hide. In 1970-1971, the National Police HQ opened to 40,000 agents refresher courses on the art of repression and torture.

7,000 round-ups were carried out in Saigon by the police in 1970. During the mopping-up operation "For

(1) The population has doubled from 1962 to 1968.
(2) Quoted by the *New York Times*, February 16, 1970.

the people" (sic) 280,000 people were arrested and jailed, many among them put to the question; 43,000 were "illegally detained", according to the authorities. Two other sweeps took place in 1971: one for the overall control of taxes, during which 200,000 houses were searched; the other, dubbed "Concerted Actions" and made in the greatest secret, was aimed at laying hands on the "suspects" and browbeating the "recalcitrants" (373 people liquidated and 2,490 others arrested on December 8,16 and 22).

During three raids in Hue, Quang Tri and Dong Ha, 30,000 people were detained and tortured in 1970. The penitentiaries of Con Dao (Poulo Condor), Cay Dua, Tan Hiep, Thu Duc... refined upon barbarity. American journalist Don Luce revealed that a US firm had signed on August 11, 1971 a contract of 400,000 dollars to build 300 "tiger cages".

All town quarters are subjected to a strict control. The system of "five-family groups" remains in force, each group being overseen by a chief.

The administration uses violence against the workers. Typical of this is the incident of the dockers at the Saigon new port in June 1971. Disregarding a collective contract, the American bosses wanted to replace the Vietnamese dockers by South Korean mercenaries. They had to retreat in face of an important strike. To achieve their goal, they ordered Trân Quoc Buu, president of the Federation (yellow) of Labourers to give 1,500,000 piasters to hooligans who, disguised as workers provoked bloody scuffles. At their instigation, the Saigon police surrounded the port and blocked its food supply.

The whole world is aware of the inhuman treatment suffered by the students. Teachers and professors were beaten in full class. Late in December 1969, 20 students were arrested and tortured into avowing themselves NFL "agents". The attempt having failed, Thieu liquidated his own agent, student Le Khac Sinh Nhat and blamed the murder upon the General Association of Saigon Students to have a pretext of persecuting it. At the end of 1971, the president of this Association Huynh Tan Mam was thrown into jail. Such intellectuals as Mrs Ngo Ba Thanh, Professor Tran Thi Lan were arrested several times.

Hoodlum practices were applied to somewhat recalcitrant Buddhists and Catholics. Everybody still remembers the raid of an armed gang against An Quang pagoda during the curfew hours and the bloody crime at the "Viet Nam Quoc Tu" pagoda (May 1970). On December 29, 1971, the "Judas" Duong Hoang Thanh at the head of hundreds of paratroops broke the gates of the Saigon Archbishopric church to capture three priests who had taken the defence of the workers.

Thieu also strikes at the followers of the regime who show the least desire of opposition. He has imprisoned the president of the "Association of Disabled Servicemen", arrested and killed a number of them, and cracked down on the soldiers' families who claimed for their rights. Trampling upon parliamentary immunity, he has staged provocations to put in prison "deputy" Ngo Cong Duc who had to flee abroad, and to arrest "deputy" Trân Tuân Nham several times in August 1971.

The press is tightly gagged. "Over the past 13 months, there have been about 200 seizures of newspapers and reviews in the capital. A record figure in the world. An unprecedented situation in our press since more than a century under different political regimes: French colonialism, Japanese militarism, Viet Minh, autonomy of Cochinchina, Bao Dai, First Republic or Ngo Dinh Diem reign. A record which does not give any credit to the Second Republic and a none too brilliant exploit for the present leaders" (Saigon paper *Duoc Nha Nam*, February 21-22, 1971). Let us mention a rather symptomatic fact: on February 18, 1971, Father Châu Tin, director of the newspaper *Doi Diên* (Confrontation), and Father Truong Ba Can, author of two articles carried by this paper under the titles of "25 years of building North Viet Nam" and "Production under US bombs," were condemned to nine months of prison.

Along with terror, the Saigon authorities take draconian economic measures to serve the Nixon war. The "Vietnamization" is a barrel of Danaids that the most generous US aid cannot fill up, the more so as Washington wants to shift part of the war cost on to its lackeys. Since 1968, the war spendings absorb two-thirds of the Saigon budget (63 per cent). They rocket year after year: 130 billion piasters in 1969, 179 in 1970 (15 times over 1961), 267 in 1971 (twice over 1969). Saigon relies on the fisc. Late in 1969, there was the "austerity tax", followed in 1970 with a "parallel exchange rate of the dollar" to hide a new devaluation of the piaster after that of 1969.

The escalation of taxes has proved fantastic: 77 billion in 1969 (twelve times over 1955), 97 billion in 1970 and 170 billion (planned receipts) in 1971. Inflation has taken a similar trend: 43 billion in 1969, 60 in 1970 and 100 in 1971.

After his "prefabricated" electoral success, Thieu put forward on November 15, 1971 a "program of Autumn economic and financial reforms", to try and fill up the 1971 budgetary deficit (50 billion piasters) and reduce the 1972 one estimated at 100 billion. This program mainly consists in devaluating the piaster by 45 per cent to make the US aid more efficient, raise the price of staple goods (rice, milk, medicine) and set off a large scale inflation. Thieu has threatened with death the opponents of his program.

While the "governmental" swindles enable to fill part of the war budget and line the pockets of the President's clientele and the speculators, they make more precarious the living conditions of the population in the occupied zone, particularly in the towns. The rise of salaries and allowances (like the monthly hike of 100 piasters to functionaries and armymen (decision of March 5, 1971) are nothing but demagogic manoeuvres with no result in view of the increasing difficulties. As the *Cong Luan* wrote on November 25, 1971: "The increments only bring us suffering. We would like a quintal of rice instead of an augmentation which compels us to spend three times more."

House rent zooms up as 2.8 million people out of 4 million in the Saigon region are crowded in an area of 21 square miles. The average density amounts to 148

inhabitants per acre (Tokyo: 63 per cent) and up to 830 in certain districts (1). In other urban centres, the density although lesser reaches alarming proportions. Meanwhile, the forced exodus to the towns keeps up. In a camp of refugees near Quang Ngai, 242 families (911 people) evacuated from Ngoc Loc hamlet live in shelters of 9 by 15 feet reserved for 13 inmates each (2).

Rice, staple food, costs increasingly dearer as the rice-growing areas often deserted by the population are subjected to bombings and sprayings of chemicals. South Viet Nam, an exporter of rice (one million tons a year before 1939) has been compelled to import it (600,000 tons in 1970). The price of rice has gone up from 4,500 to 11,000 piasters a quintal in 1971. On March 5, 1971, Thieu decided to increase even the official price of rice supplied as US aid (from 2,100 - 2,500 to 4,150 - 5,000 piasters a quintal).

The other staple goods are no longer within the reach of urban masses. In 1971, a can of milk cost from 50 to 100 piasters, a phial of medicine from 250 to 675 piasters, a metre of poplin from 157 to 282 piasters. There is a shortage of cement owing to the crisis of dwellings and the building of military works.

In 1971, the whole of South Viet Nam had 82 factories in activity, working mostly for the war and the consumption of American militarymen. Home-made goods cannot compete with imported ones. The industrialists protest against the increment of the dollars

(1) *Viet Nam Guardian* (March 22, 1969).

(2) Quoted by Laurence A.G. Moss and Zamarek M. Shaizi.

exchange rate which leads to a 100 per cent rise in the price of imported raw materials (*Tin Sang*, December 12, 1971). The traders, especially the small ones, see their business slack. Many cloth-sending firms have closed down. Food enterprises like bread-ovens seek less customers due to the increase of wheat price. The *Doc Lap* of March 17, 1971, disclosed that 12,000 traders had turned back their licence to the Minister of Economy. The *Dan Chung* of March 13, 1971, published the answer of a "deputy" in an interview: "I am afraid that the population, in the first place the armymen and the functionaries, cannot hold on in the present situation". In a more explicit letter to the government (March 15, 1971) the Union of Functionaries and Employees of Private Buddhist Enterprises pointed out: "In the past, our too low salaries (monthly) could not maintain us for ten days. Now they can just keep us for five days."

Misery goes along with diseases, gangsterism, debauchery and corruption.

Saigon was conceived by the French for a population of 300,000. Under the present demographic pressure the old structures have burst out. The same occurs in the other urban centres. Vast sections of the capital will always be short of water, the poorest being not catered. A Vietnamese taxi-driver has said to an American: "The rub in your water distribution system is that all the mains converge on the concrete houses. Myself who lives in a thatch-house am compelled to buy water from a rich landlord." (1). The lack of

(1) Don Luce: "*Viet Nam: The Life on a Sad Land.*"

hygiene turns the heavily-populated centres into foci of of cholera, small-pox, bubonic plague, leper, typhoid fever (1).

Veneral diseases are all the rage. According to the *Doc Lap* (May 29, 1971), the "Treatment Central of Veneral Diseases" in Saigon receives each day 200 patients, 75 per cent of them are aged between 15 and 18; this is all but nothing compared to the mass of patients, the doctors say.

Prostitution profiferates. After the *Time* (May 10, 1971), most of the 300,000 prostitutes in South Viet Nam produce the same history: they are afraid that their family knows the secret of their pecuniary resources. Adolescents between 13 and 14 sell themselves to earn a living.

Gangsterism is practised in broad daylight in the streets of Saigon, Hue and Da Nang. Some bandits put on puppet soldiers' denims and move in the cars of the local administration which is often in connivance with them. The *Doc Lap* (May 23, 1971) complains that "hooliganism and banditism constantly threaten the population" of Nha Trang and that some gangs seize the velomotors in the streets.

The US-Saigon authorities also resort to the intoxication of minds by the introduction of the "American way of life", creating a climate of general corruption (2). The review *Dai Hoc Moi* (New University)

(1) After Laurence, A.B. Moss and Zamarek M. Shalizi.

(2) Read: Ideologic and cultural action (Vietnamese Studies, No 31, *US neo-colonialism in South Viet Nam)*.

wrote: "When thinking of the urban youth, we are dismayed at its moral degradation due to this kind of imported pathologic culture." The president of the Association of Saigon Teachers stressed: "The big wigs and their wives patronize a congress of vagabonds (who call themselves hippies), a typical organization of the minority of playboys who want to parrot foreigners. Those "hippies" or "party of teen-agers" have been so far supported by the authorities. While the administration sets up a "Committee to Suppress Narcotics", marijuana is supplied to the hippies. Let nobody be astonished to see collective rapes often committed at the instigation of playboys, for these are strongly backed by the men in the power." (*Cong Luan*, March 30, 1971). Mrs. Nguyen Thanh Nhan draws our attention on "one of the greatest evils which befall our people: the pornographic publications, especially the foreign sexy reviews sold galore in the bookshops, the novels grossly obscene, the music compositions akin to demence. Those debase products of culture have the effect of diverting our people from the evils which come every hour, every minute in our land" (*Duoc Nha Nam*, November 19, 1970).

The war machine set off by "Vietnamization" ceaselessly claims for new contigents of servants. During a teach-in on "the ideal of the youth in the present society", held in Saigon on July 11, 1971, a barrister noted: "Throughout the country (South Viet Nam—*Pub.*) there are over 5 million youths. In fact, 120,000 of them participate in the activities of various organizations. The remainder belongs to the barracks."

Debauchery, culture and even education under some aspects have to help draft. One fosters legionaries without fatherland and thugs for money by destroying the social structures which frame the child and the youth: village, family, profession. Then, the psychologic conditioning of which we have spoken a little strips the victim of all national, simply humane, feeling.

The climate of corruption is maintained thanks to American aid which disposes man to consume and not to produce, to spend and not earn until the day when nobody has money to buy." (*Dan Chu Moi*, November 10, 1971). This is the fate reserved for the small people. The great, the comprador bourgeois, the big landowners, the high-ranking in the army, the speculators, have nothing to suffer. With over a billion and a half US dollars in foods and other consumer articles, everybody is guaranteed to have his share.

However, against the action of the dollar, the bayonet, the sexy and other cultural weapons of neo-colonialism, the various strata of the urban population have unceasingly waged a tenacious and violent fight.

The struggle for peace and neutrality, put under the sign of national independence and anti-Americanism, is the common trait of the most various tendencies and gathers the consensus of the most different walks of life (students, intellectuals, workers, progressive Buddhists and Catholics, women, disabled servicemen...). A correspondent of *Wall Street Journal*, Peter Kahn, cabled from Saigon in November 1971 that the Vietnamese overtly criticized the US presence and that "US go home" had become a fashionable motto

even of non-communists. Early in 1971, the murder of a Vietnamese student in Qui Nhon by a GI had triggered a movement of "urban guerilla" mainly consisting in attacking GIs and burning American cars (1). On February 19, the Saigon General Association of Students set afire many US cars to protest against the visit of Thompson, Nixon's adviser in counter-guerilla. Ignoring the order of shooting the "guilty" on the spot, the Saigon students and pupils destroyed or burnt 90 American cars within a month and a half (September 15-late October 1971). In Hue, from August 17 to 20, the burial of student Dang Zung run over by an American car turned into a parade of over 10,000 students, pupils and citizens. The demonstrators carried besides Dang Zung's coffin another one bearing the following words: "25 years of war". Effigies of Nixon and Thieu were burnt. In September, during many students, demonstrations in Saigon, leaflets were distributed and streamers diplayed with the inscriptions: "Down with Bunker!" (2) "Yankees, go home!"...

"The present war is not an ideological war between capitalism and communism, as some people pretend," "the presence of the USA and its allies in South Viet Nam is the continuation of the French invasion of the Indochinese peninsula," thus pointed out the Manifesto of the Fourth Congress of Buddhist Students (December 26-29, 1970). A "Popular Front for Peace" came into being in Gia Dinh (November 1970). It called on the

(1) *The He*, a Vietnamese monthly review published in Canada (Supplement of February-March 1971).

(2) US Ambassador in Saigon.

"progressive, peace- and justice-loving peoples in the world in struggle along with the Vietnamese people to check the war acts of the mad imperialist forces which go counter to the progress of mankind." The Association of Wives and Mothers for the Return of their Husbands and Sons was founded (February 1971) in presence of 1,000 representatives from all social strata (workers, intellectuals, traders, peasants, housewives...). It was supported by the "Movement of Women for the Right to Live" which declared: "The Movement demands that Nixon put an end to the Indochina war..." and energetically launched a campaign for the return of husbands and sons.

The sending of Saigon troops to Cambodia and Laos was severely condemned by public opinion. Commented Venerable Thich Nhat Thuong, deputy secretary-general of the Buddhist Institute (Vien Hoa Dao): "The Vietnamese, peaceful by nature, are turned into mercenaries of the Expeditionary Corps... The experience shows that President Thieu docilely obeys the US government. The Viet Nam Liaison Committee of Peace Forces revealed in a statement (February 15, 1971) "the extension of the war, the bellicose nature of the Nguyen Van Thieu government which is always ready to sell at dirt cheap price the people's blood for its personal interest"; it "denounces the perfidious American design to use native lackeys to make small people kill one another and serve imperialist interest". According to AFP, many wives of Saigon soldiers killed or wounded in Laos demonstrated in the Bien Hoa cemetery (March 25, 1971) to demand the return of mercenaries sent to Laos and Cambodia.

The struggle against the "militarization of schools" is broadly supported by the population. The burial of student Pham Hanh died at Quang Trung training camp gathered 15,000 people from 50 mass organizations in a parade 15 km long. The streamers carried the following watchwords: "Let us boycott the military training program in schools!", "Down with Nguyen Van Thieu!", "Bunker, go home!". The Saigon General Association of Students and its counterparts in South Viet Nam held their Fourth Congress in the capital to protest against the military training in schools. In a letter sent to people of good-will throughout the world, the Congress wrote: "The military training program in schools is aimed at making all Vietnamese, particularly the youth, soldiers at the service of the present militarist dictature". The opposition to conscription takes many forms, sometimes very violent.

The thirst for a peace in national independence is reflected by the favourable answer of the various urban strata to the proposal put forward by the NFL and the Provisional Revolutionary Government. Superior Bonze Thich Huyen Quang acknowledged that the PRG really desired peace and displayed a moderate attitude and a spirit of union. The publication of Nixon's eight points (January 25, 1972) and the elaborations on the PRG's too main points (February 2, 1972) aroused many private and public discussions. Non-communist newspapers like the *Duoc Nha Nam* (February 5, 1972) took the opportunity to reproduce the key ideas of the PRG's eight points (September 17,

1970) and seven points, and to note that: "The other side puts forward an articulate (peace) plan". Nixon's offer to make Thieu resign one month before the elections does not deceive anybody. It is clear what the host of the White House is driving at: he persists in his attempt at imposing upon the South Vietnamese people a government at US beck and call, for the elections will take place at bayonet point. "Deputy" Ho Ngoc Nhuan said the following in the *Tin Sang* (February 10, 1972): "When President Nixon maintains the present police apparatus to back these elections, what result could they have? Let us imagine (just for fun) that by an impossible hazard the other side, accepting Nixon's eight-point peace proposal, presents its candidates to confront President Thieu. What would happen in the coming days and months?

"There is beyond any doubt that the "Phoenix" campaigns could be re-activated with the order to strike without trial. Tens of thousands of cadres from the other side would collapse under the charge of "banditry", "rape", "swindle"... That is obvious. On the other hand, the nationalists in the opposition would suffer the same fate...

"When I think of the arrests and threats made by the authorities before the elections to the Presidency and the National Assembly in 1971, I am overcome with fear."

In the framework of the struggle for democratic liberties, the most fierce and characteristic combat is that waged against the farce of fraudulent elections, the "stage manager" of which is ambassador Bunker.

How were the elections to the House of Representatives carried out in August 1971? A "representative" denounced that the Bac Lieu province chief had used 20,000 illegal voting cards. According to the daily *Dan Chu* (August 29), a major named Tran Van Lieu came and denounced before the National Assembly that the commander of the Fifth Infantry Division had ordered the officers and soldiers of this unit to vote only for Thieu's followers. "Representative" Ngo Cong Duc protested against the fact that the Tra Vinh civilian and military authorities had threatened the functionaries with dismissal and the armymen with transfer to the Cambodian or Lao war theatres should they vote for the opposition candidates. "Committes against election frauds" were set up by various strata of the urban population and some parliamentary groups.

As for the presidential elections (October 1971), that was a gross comedy. Duong Van Minh and Nguyen Cao Ky withdrew their candicacy at the last minute to "dissociate themselves from the farce", leaving Thieu with his ridiculous position as "unique candidate". In the Saigon streets there appeared Nixon's portraits with the inscription: "Let us struggle against the Yankees to save our fatherland". The *Dan Chu Moi* (October 4) carried an accusing evidence: "One finds in the polling booths (in Saigon) too few electors but too many security agents, among them secret ones... Electors are rather scarce, mostly women". In Hue, students and pupils, Buddhists and disabled servicemen turned out in the streets, chanting watchwords against Thieu's election farce; repressed and dispersed, they gathered

elsewhere. Nguyen Van Chu, president of the "Legislative Committee of the Senate" declared: "I am disgusted that Mr. Thieu and his agents have put forward a percentage of votes that nobody can believe" *AP*, October 5).

Gradually, the followers of various religions link the defence of their democracy to that of their faith. It is interesting to note the significant evolution of certain Catholic circles. Thus father Nguyen Ngoc Lan defined the relations between religion and politics: "One can prolong and maintain the war against communism under the pretext that there are socialist regimes which encroach upon religious freedom. But, about this matter, one must reconsider certain problems, at least for us who do not absolutely want that religion may constitute a driving force of the war. What is this liberty that the 'free world' reserves for religion. Is it not, in sum, a liberty reserved for the religion subdued by a political force in connivance with bellicose and reactionary regimes which hinder the necessary march of mankind toward a world of equality and justice? On the other hand, when a socialist regime limits the liberty of such and such religion in given historic conditions, it is because the latter has connived with reactionary structures." (Letter to the World Congres on Religion and Peace held in Tokyo, October 21, 1970).

On the economic plane, the laboring masses struggle for the betterment of their living standard. The 1971 economic and financial measures roused the people with indignation. The Union of Small Traders in Saigon 36 markets, the Commission for the Right to Live of our

Fellow-countrymen, the Viet Nam Union of Free Educational Workers, 30 Unions in Da Nang raised their voices to demand that the Saigon administration rescind these measures. The struggles of the workers at the ESSO and SHELL companies which had begun in Nha Be in April-May spread to Tan Son Nhut and Saigon.

The strike at the American RMK—BRJ firm involved 20,000 people (1970). As the employers had recourse to foreign workers, the strikers occupied the shops and construction sites while the Saigon Federation of Trade-Unions alerted its affiliated organizations.

Late in July 1971, the struggle against the tax or salaries and wages conducted by 17 unions in Saigon took a great scope. "For the first time in the history of our labouring people, the government was overcome by a general strike. For the first time the unions of various organizations are united to struggle." (Saigon daily *Chinh Luan*).

The strike of 700 workers at the "Eagle" battery factory in which Thieu's wife holds the greatest number of shares deserves a special mention by its evolution in the political sense. It was started on September 2,1971 against groundless dismissals and for the improvement of working conditions. The administration launched a savage repression against the strikers: workers were gravely wounded, woman-workers among them the secretary-general of the union were stripped of their clothes and heavily beaten, 18 unions belonging to the General Federation of Labour decided to strike in support. The president and the secretary-general of the Federation were arrested together with three priests

coming to help the strikers. These were also backed by the Saigon Association of Journalists and several "members of Parliament".

The war wounded and disabled also wage a struggle to better their living conditions. In Saigon, they confronted the field police and the "rangers" (September 1970). Many disabled and members of families of soldiers killed in action staged a sit-down demonstration in front of the "National Assembly" (September 1970). The struggle continued unabated.

In the cultural point of view, the urban population awakens to the degradation of national culture poisoned by Americanism. Protests came from all political horizons and social organizations, particularly from the intellectuals, educational workers, women, students, religious believers...

"In face of the American implantation, the struggle on the cultural plane is a must, if we do not want that ourselves and our descendants fall to the rank of 'Yellow Americans', lower than the Black Americans," wrote Professor Ly Chanh Trung. "In face of the painful reality of our country, everything is clear. On the one hand it is the foreigner, on the other the nation.' (Truong Zuong in *Dai hoc Moi* review). Mrs Nguyen Thanh Nhan "hopes that genuine writers and journalists, united with other representatives of culture. in the name of national dignity and the future of our offspring, start a nationwide movement to struggle against the pornographic products under all forms, so as to raise the national feeling and defend the traditions of our people" (*Duoc Nha Nam*, November 19, 1970).

On the culture plane, resistance is no less active than on the political and economic planes. In the universities, schools, pagodas, churches... progressive men of culture courageously defend the national patrimony. In Saigon, there exists a full scale literature of opposition. The "return to the nation" has become a watchword among the patriotic intellectuals.

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South Viet Nam is the theatre of a fierce confrontation: "pacification" versus "counter-pacification" in the countryside, draconian control and resistance on all planes in the towns.

Where does the matter stand on the threshold of the fourth year of "Vietnamization"?

A Saigon newspaper gives the following answer: "On the one hand, the Americans withdraw their troops (in part — *Pub.*): on the other, they increase the aid to achieve the rural "pacification" plan in order to ensure "security" to the Saigon authorities... But nothing guarantees the "pacification" of the countryside. The combativity of Vietnamese (Saigon — *Pub.*) troops is not matched by the withdrawal of GIs.

"Although their struggles (of the opposition forces) are hindered by bayonets and rockets, their morale is firm. The more they are repressed, the more discontent are the people, the more isolated is the administration...

"(As the economic depression aggravates the misery), the people will further complain and the discontent will become greater" (*Tin Sang*, November 5-8, 1971).

This analysis concurs with the remark made by Lawyer Trinh Dinh Thao, president of the Viet Nam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces which, starting from another point of view, has reached this conclusion about the struggle of the urban population :

"To the urban population in South Viet Nam, the situation is most favourable" (1).

1. Answer to an interview of the *Thong Nhat* on the occasion of the Third Anniversary of the Viet Nam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces.

From Phnom Penh to Vientiane

KY SON and DICH VAN

Until the end of the Second World War, a number of countries in Asia and the Pacific including Laos and Cambodia were seen through the prism of a colonial exotism as immutable Shangri-las.

Laos, the country of "homes that lined up alongside the river", of pagodas "the spires of which pierced through the foliage of trees", of "gardens, scattered houses and pagodas" (1). "The Lao is quiet, timid and weak-minded. He keeps a discipline which does not allow him to revolt against even the worst treatments" (2). The Lao revolution has given the world a quite different image of Laos and her people who, since a quarter of a century, have valiantly fought for her liberty (3).

(1) Francis Garnier: *Voyage d'exploration en Indochine.*

(2) *Twenty years of the Lao Revolution,* Neo Lao Haksat Editions, 1965.

(3) We shall not deal at length with the Lao Revolution in this writing. The reader is therefore asked to see our previous issues, No 28 in particular.

As for Cambodia, until the events in 1970, it evoked to many foreigners "a bygone civilization, people and past" (1), the country of "peaceful kompongs", of "good-natured people who leisurely pestle their grains near their vegetable stalls, merchants of silence and quietude" (2).

The aftermath of Khmerization

Cambodia two years later

It is precisely those "merchants of silence and quietude" who, since the March 18, 1970 putsch — the first landmark of Khmerization of the Nixon's war — have astonished the world by the rapid growth of their resistance against US aggression. The Khmer people "were not taken by surprise". "For years," said a representative of the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia (3), "we have seen the Americans at work in Viet Nam. We have been always on the look out. At first, our weapon was our policy of independence and neutrality. As this neutrality considerably hampered their aggressive action in Viet Nam, the Americans hatched one plot after another against neutral Cambodia (4). The Khmer people were thus prepared for a more and more direct confrontation with US

(1) Francis Garnier: *Voyage d'exploration en Indochine.*

(2) Luc Durtain: *Dieux blancs, Hommes jaunes.*

(3) Sien An, RGNUK Ambassador in Hanoi. Read the *Viet Nam Courier*, Nov. 16, 1970, issue.

(4) Following are the main US assaults upon Cambodian independence and neutrality: . . .

imperialism. We were aware that the Americans would not confine their activity to Viet Nam.

... The entire Khmer people had been alive to the danger threatening their independence and freedom. When a people have been awakened, they'll have the necessary energy and initiative."

It should be noted that the Khmer people inherit the indomitable traditions of the Angkor epoch (8-14th centuries) and successfully resisted French domination. Certain authors do not hesitate to make a comparison between the popular uprising of 1970 and that of 1885-1886, a real guerilla warfare with popular complicity against the Protectorate authority (1).

Looking back to the past we can better assess the prodigious growth of the Khmer revolution, especially during the period of decisive confrontation from March to June 1970.

— 1953: Senator Knowland and US Ambassador in Saigon Donald Heath brought pressure to bear on Phnom Penh to join the anti-communist crusade.

— 1955: US pressure on Cambodia for her entry into SEATO.

— 1959: Dap Chuon's plot concocted by the CIA against Prince Sihanouk.

— 1959 - 1963: the CIA helped the Khmers Serei (Free Khmers) against Prince Sihanouk.

— 1961 - 1969: 7,000 territorial violations by US-Saigon troops (300 people killed).

(1) Read Jean Claude Pomonti and Serge Thion: *Des Courtisans aux Partisans* (La crise cambodgienne), NRF, Gallimard 1971.

The events took place at an accelerated tempo (1):

— March 18: Lon Nol's coup d'état. Popular demonstrations against the coup (up to March 21, in 17 of the 19 Cambodian provinces).

— March 23: Prince Sihanouk's appeal for armed resistance and the formation of the National United Front of Kampuchea (NUFK).

— March 26: Demonstrations in Kompong Cham. Lon Nol gave order to open fire on the demonstrators.

— March 28: Demonstrations of workers at Prek Kah and Chup rubber plantations.

— March 29: US troops were allowed to cross the frontier to join the Saigon troops.

— March 29: The popular forces attacked Lon Nol's troops.

— April 24-25: Summit Conference of the Indochinese Peoples.

— April 30: Nixon announced the invasion of Cambodia by US and Saigon armed forces.

— May 5: Prince Sihanouk announced the formation of the Royal Government of National Union of Kampuchea (RGNUK).

— June 22: Prince Sihanouk let it be known that half of the Cambodian territory was under the control of the armed forces of the National United Front of Kampuchea.

(1) Read *Vietnamese Studies* No 28 (*Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia* 1969-1970).

— June 30: Withdrawal of US forces but US artillery and aviation continued to bombard Khmer territory while Saigon troops still remained there.

On a front of 400 km, the US-Saigon offensive was spearheaded against two regions called Fish Hook and Parrot's Beak: 70,000 men supported by tanks, artillery and B.52's and comprising elite American units such as the 4th and 25th Infantry Divisions, the 1st Air Cavalry Division, the 11th Armoured Regiment. That was quite a big trial, but the young revolution valiantly stood the test. By the end of June 1970, before the withdrawal of US troops, the revolutionary forces put out of action more than 20,000 American and Saigon troops, among them nearly 10,000 GIs, 25,000 officers and men of the Phnom Penh puppet army, and attacked 12 out of 19 provincial capitals, liberating 4 provincial capitals, many district centers and hundreds of villages.

US invasion has proved to be "a serious strategic blunder and a political mistake fraught with grave consequences for President Nixon's Asia policy" (1). The Khmer people united around the NUFK have foiled all military and political schemes of the Americans and their allies. In the first two months of the dry season, they annihilated nearly 20,000 enemy troops, downed

(1) Charles Mayer, *Behind the Khmer smile*, Plon 1971.

more than 20 planes and destroyed about 200 military vehicles.

Heavy fighting raged on Road No 4 in January 1971. Saigon had to throw in new reinforcement battalions, which were immediately encircled and decimated. On January 22, the Pochentong airport suffered heavy losses in a surprise attack. On February 23, Do Cao Tri, the Saigon general who commanded the Cambodian expedition, was killed in his helicopter. On the night of March 1, the patriots set afire 70,000 cu.m. of petroleum during an attack on the Sihanoukville oil refinery.

Following is the summing up of the situation in Cambodia on the eve of 1972 made by Ieng Sary, special envoy of the inland section of the NUFK and the RGNUK :

"... They (the US imperialists) have granted to their lackeys, the Lon Nol - Sirik Matak - Son Ngoc Thanh clique of traitors, over 350 million dollars of financial, economic and military aid to mount 'pacification' operations during which they burn all and destroy all, pen up the inhabitants in 'strategic hamlets' and forcibly enlist them in the puppet army. They have also been trying to harass and cut off the communication lines linking the east to the west, the north to the south, of our liberated areas.

"But all these criminal schemes have met with dramatic failure. In the flush of their past victories, our

people and armed forces, in the last rainy season, inflicted stinging reverses on the enemy in Operation 'Chenla 2'. The Rum Luong battle has gone down in our history as one of our biggest military feats... Phnom Penh, now in insecurity, is cut off from the outside world... (In an attempt to rescue the Lon Nol - Sirik Matak-Son Ngoc Thanh clique on November 22, 1971, on order from the US imperialists 50,000 Saigon troops made a new inroad into Cambodia... However, that new military adventure was again foiled. The debacle of the Phnom Penh troops on National Road No 6 brought about the disintegration of, and confusion in, the ranks of the ruling clique." (1)

This military situation gave rise to a political crisis and an economic depression which we shall deal with in another article. The victory of the Khmer people rightly confirms Prince Sihanouk's prediction in July 1970: "Nixon will have succeeded in making the Khmer people a revolutionary one."

The components of the Khmer Revolution

The NUFK rallies "the Khmers residing abroad and those living in the country (religious and non-religious, military and civilian, men and women), all those who advocate independence, democracy, neutrality, progress, socialism, Buddhism, nationalism, territorial integrity

1. *Viet Nam Courier*, January 31, 1972.

of the country in its present borders, anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism, to set up a united front." (Program of the NUFK).

The *peasantry* constitutes unquestionably the main force of the revolution. It makes up 90 per cent of the population.

Cambodia did not likely have any acute agrarian problem that plagues over-populated rice-growing countries in Asia. She never knew any serious famine. She had enough land for all her people: it sufficed to put a plot of land under culture to be called its owner, the right of inalienable ownership belonging to the king. By the Convention of 1884, the French turned the customary ownership into private ownership governed by Roman law. But until recently, this juridical measure has not given rise to land ownership — the peasants remaining loyal to the custom — save European capitalist ownership of rubber, tobacco, pepper plantations.

However, since the 1960's a class of middle and small proprietors has begun to emerge. The tendency to land concentration has been pointed out by Hou Nim in 1965 — a concentration which goes hand in hand with the impoverishment of peasants. High-ranking functionaries have set up rubber or coco plantations covering hundreds of hectares. The peasant has met with ever increasing difficulties: impossible extension of cultivable areas in fertile but populated regions as well as in other sterile regions, rapid indebtedness due to usurious rate

of interest (6 to 10 per cent per month), corruption of local functionaries, very low paddy yield (1 ton per hectare annually). That is why the peasant joins the NUFK whose agrarian program opens to him better prospects (1).

The peasantry's involvement is due to another motive, as two Western observers have correctly said: "Why do the peasants fight in a war of this type? For their physical and daily survival. To avoid being overcome by threats which weigh heavily upon them: the avalanche of means of destruction, pressganging and the collapse of economic networks". (Jean Claude Pomonti and Serge Thion, *Des Courtisans aux Partisans*, NRF, Gallimard 1971).

The *workers* with their vanguard detachment, the Procheachon, stand at the first rank of the patriotic struggle. Until the restoration of peace in Indochina (1954) the workers in rubber plantations were the exclusive proletarians in Cambodia. They supplied very active members to the resistance against the French (2).

Ten days after Lon Nol's putsch, those of Prek Kak demonstrated at the same time with those of Chup against the Rightist faction.

The ranks of the Khmer working class swell with the setting up of a number of State and private enterprises (textile mills, cement works, rubber plants, pulp mills,

1. Wilfred Burchett, *The Second Indochina War*, Seuil 1970.

2. Wilfred Burchett, *The Second Indochina War*, Seuil 1970.

etc.). The industrial proletariat was born after 1954, along with a class of rickety local capitalists.

The progressive *intellectuals* join the NUFK. Let's name the most eminent among them, young Leftist intellectuals who distinguish themselves by their integrity and conviction: Khieu Samphan, Doctor of Economic Sciences, former Director of *L'Observateur*, Hou Youn, Doctor of Economic Sciences, Hu Nim, Doctor of Laws, Son Sen, professor, Tiv Ol, former college headmaster, Mme Ponary, professor, Ieng Sary, former professor, Thioun Mum, polytechnician, etc.

The *Buddhist clergy*, originated from the people, lives among the people and shares their patriotic aspirations and the respect for national traditions. At the village level, the bonze exerts a very great influence. "The history of Cambodia in the last hundred years is full of heroic feats against colonial rule creditable to the *achars*, that is the ex-Buddhist monks... At present, they take an active part in the mobilization of the patriotic forces. They are eye witnesses and victims of heinous crimes of the US aggressors and lackeys who destroy pagodas, kill their dear ones, and force them into activities banned by the religion" (1).

Thus the co-existence of Buddhist monks and progressive and Marxist militants in the NUFK does not give rise to serious problems, for the unity of views and action can be realized in a national liberation and popular revolutionary struggle.

(1) Interview with Ieng Sary by the *Viet Nam Courier*, January 31, 1972)

The growth of the resistance

On that framework of national union, the Khmer resistance makes steady progress following the political line of the NUFK with Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, Head of State, as its President and Samdech Penn Nouth as President of its Political Bureau (1).

The Royal Government of National Union of Kampuchea, placed under the aegis of the NUFK, has been to date recognized by 28 countries. It is led by Prime Minister Samdech Penn Nouth, an experienced politician. Since 1953, Penn Nouth had defended Cambodian neutrality despite the threats of Senator Knowland, leader of the "Chinese lobby" and Donald Heath, American Ambassador in Saigon. Sihanouk has thus paid homage to his Mentor and hard-time Prime Minister: "The Cambodian people have always loved and admired my elder brother Penn Nouth for he is a great patriot, a fair and righteous man who has never vacillated on the question of independence and loyalty to the people".

Penn Nouth's cabinet has a marked character of a front composition comprising former high-ranking officials (ministers, ambassadors), leftist intellectuals and even the military. The average age of its members is under fifty.

Owing to the conditions of the struggle, the NUFK and the RGNUK exercise their leadership through an

(2) Other Politbureau members: Chau Seng, General Duong Sam On, Chan Youran, Chea San, Hou Youn, Hu Nim, Huot Sambath, Khieu Samphan, Sarin Chhak and Thioun Mum.

external part which is entrusted with diplomacy and information and an internal part which organizes the country.

All the leaders of the internal part headed by Vice-Premier and Minister of Defense Khieu Samphan are veteran revolutionaries who put up the first war of resistance against French colonialism (1951 - 1954) then continually struggled against US imperialism. Khieu Samphan had, since 1953 when he was in France, opposed the colonial war in Indochina. Returning to his country in 1958 he kept on his patriotic activities by engaging in journalism (L'*Observateur*) and in politics (deputy, minister). To avoid a plot contrived against him by the fascist traitors in the pay of the CIA, he joined the maquis together with other leftist intellectuals among them Hou Yuon and Hu Nim.

"The principle of all popular resistance is self-reliance, and sound organization at the grass - roots." (1)

Following its foundation, the NUFK held elections in the free zones to elect the Committees of village, *Khum*, district and province which solve at their respective level all problems : political, military, economic and social. Those affiliates of the NUFK r lly the various strata and social sections of the people into special organizations for the implementation of a common policy on the national and international scale. Take for example the Association of Democratic Women headed by Mme Ponary, the Youth Association headed by Thou

(1) Statement by Sien An, Ambassador of the RGNUK in Hanoi. (*Viet Nam Courier*, Nov. 16, 1970).

Rin and several trade-union organizations led by Nguon Eng (for the workers) and Chon Chet (for the peasants), etc. The administrative affairs are run by Hou Yuon, Minister of the Interior.

The peasants went to the polls with enthusiasm. Sam Lenh, a Khmer journalist, jotted down this moving scene: "In a locality we have just passed by, we saw Ta Yen, a 70-year-old man taking an oath before his co-villagers' meeting. With his hair dishevelled and an axe in his hand, he said: 'When the Yankee pirates enter the *phum*, even the old will welcome them with axes.' We were deeply touched by Ta Yen, his axe and his oath which called up the image, engraved in many places on the Angkor frescoes, of our ancestors fighting the Thai feudalists at the dawn of our nation." The local committees play an important role in the daily life. Thus, at Kompong Thmar, "the new power had been set up for nearly one month but the members of its Committee, elected by over 300 representatives of 12 villages, had known how to unite more than 600 families and organize the new life in the fire of the struggle. They had seen to the evacuation of the old people and the feeding of the population in the days when they had a shortage of rice." (H. Nam, *Khmer News Agency*).

In the villages, the people's militia are in charge of the security. They are integrated into the People's National Liberation Armed Forces of Kampuchea (PNLAFK) which comprise three categories: guerillas, regional troops and regular troops placed under the supreme command of a national military committee

aided by a staff. The regular troops are organized into regiments and the regional troops into battalions. Like all other people's armies, the PNLAFK are motivated by a high political consciousness and a high determination. Robert Anson, a *Time* correspondent who had met them, wrote: " Now we have seen the beginning of a Khmer army of liberation... It is not at all a phantom army." That was in mid-1970. At present, it is no more at its beginning.

The fighters live among the people and enjoy their affection and solicitude. Richard Dudman, a correspondent of the *Saint Louis Post Dispatch* has this to say after fourty days of visit to the liberated areas: " We have witnessed how the local population mingle with the guerillas. The peasants regard the fighters as their best friends. We feel that it is a problem of great importance for the US policy.

" In any home we stayed, the villagers appeared to offer their voluntary co-operation and their friendly relations to the guerillas. Our guards told us that our rice was given by the peasants. But other foods like vegetables, chickens, and once porcupine, were paid. In fact, we saw the soldier in charge of food supply to our small group pay a chicken with *riels*. "

The resistance takes measures to improve the peasant's life and liberate him from old social structures. Thousands of hectares of land belonging to the traitors are turned into property of the people's power or distributed to landless peasants. The people's power temporarily manages the lands of the absentees who are not traitors. If the State directly works these lands, a part

of the produce is put aside for the landowners according to their political attitude. The landless peasants work the fallow lands of resistant landowners and pay them some land rent. Usury is done away with.

The NUFK carries out an intense educational and organizational work among the peasants. It stimulates the establishment of production and consumption co-operatives, the mutual-aid movement among the peasants, the building of irrigation works and the application of new farming techniques. The problem is to produce ever more food to contribute to a protracted resistance.

Following is the atmosphere in the liberated zone of Kompong Thom described by a Khmer journalist: " The peasants return to their fieldwork. They set up production brigades in all villages. Some work fallow lands or reclaim virgin land. Other search wild tubers...

"The most important crops are rice, maize, beans and sweet potatoes. Importance is also attached to planting banana trees, sugar canes, papayas... Blacksmithy, weaving, pottery, manufacture of husking machines, etc., are boosted.

"An outward look only permits us to note that there are now more ricefields and orchards than before, that the population work more actively. But at bottom, a remarkable change is seen in both politics and ideology. Just ask a boy who is grazing his buffalo among the fields, he will tell you that besides the fields of each family, there are also fields and orchards worked by the community and the guerillas. and vegetable plots tended by children and youth... Therefore, the rear area

and the frontline are closely linked together by a spirit of patriotic emulation."

The anti-popular governments in Phnom penh and Vientiane

Allies or Masters?

By way of a multiform aid, Washington seeks to keep young nationalist States under the thumb neo-colonialism, setting up its native henchmen and implanting its own personnel in those countries. In Cambodia and Laos it is helped in this task by its agents in Saigon and Bangkok.

1. *The Americans*

From 1955 to 1963, Cambodia received from the United States an aid of 340 million dollars: 227.1 million dollars in military aid against only 112.9 in economic aid. The latter was aimed at raising US political influence, ousting French culture and barring the road to socialist development. In 1963, Prince Sihanouk saw the danger of this aid and rejected it: "Never shall we be able to realize this economic independence, the aim of all our efforts, if we do not rid ourselves of this aid which denies the State the right to see to the extension of its potential in so easy and profitable commercial activities, therefore depriving us of all spirit of enterprise... They (the aid givers) particularly sought to bring about *corruption* and by way of consequence, the *dependence* of our country."

It goes without saying that after the 1970 putsch, the Lon Nol-Sirik Matak clique asked for a US aid, as generous as possible. From March 18, 1970 to late 1971, it received 626 million dollars.

At the same time, US influence has increased. The US embassy staff has risen from 6 to 120 members, 20 times over. The mission responsible for the transfer of US armaments to Lon Nol's troops (MEDT) headed by General Metexas, has moved its office from Saigon to Phnom Penh; its staff has swelled to 500. US advisers and officers have taken in hand the defence of Phnom Penh and made inspection tours in provinces. On November 1, 1971 *AFP* revealed that during Operation Chenla II, a US colonel, a US major and a US captain were in command on Road No. 6. During a Saigon thrust into Cambodian territory (Nov. 22, 1971) US three-starred general Joseph Wilson, a member of the Command of the Air Force stationed in South Viet Nam, flew to Cambodia to discuss the operational plan. Other US high-ranking militarymen such as Mc Cain, Commander-in-Chief of the US Forces in the Pacific, Westmoreland, Chief of Staff of the US Army, were also seen in Cambodia. Thomas Moorer, Joint Chiefs of Staff of the US Inter-arms arrived in Cambodia twice to "discuss US aid", US "governors" were cynical enough to scheme the replacement of "Marshal" Lon Nol who was said in a secret cablegram of the US embassy published by journalist Jack Anderson, as an "inept militaryman, a gambler, a debauchee and a perfunctory man."

Laos enjoys Washington's special solicitude, receiving in the 1971-1972 fiscal year 374 million dollars of aid (253 of which for military expenditure). The actual aid is three times over, reported the *Far Eastern Economic Review* of November 13, 1971, if indirect and underhand aid was taken into account.

Vientiane is the paradise of colonialism, old and new. The total of Americans in this tiny city is perhaps equal to its population (10,000 in all). These Yankees occupy the best hotels such as Lang Sang, Setha and Press Hotel, and the most luxurious buildings in eastern Phalane, That Luong, Vattay. Its streets are jammed with American cars while US aircraft roar continually overhead.

Despite its care of "low profile" Washington has installed in Laos since 1962 a real "parallel government", "one of the most ambitious attempts of a foreign country at direct administration of a foreign country in the post colonial era... (Fred Branfman, *Laos: War and Revolution,* Harper and Row, New York 1970).

The American administrative apparatus caps the Royal Government in the main branches of activity and looks after the distribution of the bulk of goods to the population.

The US ambassador lays down the lines of general politics, the targets for the air war, co-ordinates the activities of the military, the USAID, the CIA and the paramilitary companies Air America and Continental Air Service. He has at his disposal 100 attachés of the

air force, certainly not to command four NCOs and three technicians of the old American C-47 registered in the official documents. The present US ambassador is a personage likely to appeal to Somerset Maugham. Shockingly picturesque details about him are given by journalist T.D. Allman:

"He (George Mc Murtrie Godley) once summed up his viewpoint on the Laotian problem by telling a group of visitors that 'the only good Communist is one six feet under the earth'.

"In Vientiane, Godley is the object of ceaseless speculation and comment. Invitations to his dinner table are more coveted than those of any Laotian official because, as one foreign resident remarked, 'Godley runs this country'.

"In Vientiane, Godley frequently is called 'the Colonel' because of the importance he places on military tactics. He is full of enthusiasm for a war which most Americans by now have come to detest...

"In executing such a strategy (Laos and Cambodia must contribute to the victory of the Viet Nam war), Godley seems an ideal choice — at least from the Nixon administration's viewpoint. Godley, according to sources close to him, has said he would like to stay in Laos until the war is won. Whatever the outcome of the war, he may continue to dominate Laos for a long time. President Nixon reputedly has said: 'I wish I had a hundred ambassadors like Mc Godley'."

The main tool of the US Embassy, of US action in Laos, is the USAID. With a contingent 7,000 strong,

USAID occupies a vast area of Vientiane with hundreds of blind alleys. It guides branches far more important than the ministries of the Lao Government: agriculture, water conservancy, education, rural development, relief for refugees, public health, industry, finance, public works, administration... It solves every matter of daily life in the whole country or more precisely in the regions under the control of the rightists: rice, salaries, prices, goods. Its tentacles stretch as far as the villages. At its head is a director registered by the US ambassador as "economic advisor". Under him there are five sector co-ordinators, mostly retired officers, put in five military regions to supervise five Lao military commanders and American officials at lower networks. One wonders why an economic organ need Thai sentries in uniform with bludgeons in the hands and revolvers on the hips, to protect radar pylons, radio antennae, and storages whose walls are made of thick reinforced concrete? John Hannath, USAID director, recognized that "the USAID program serves as a screen for CIA operation in Laos" (*AP*, June 7, 1970).

"Indeed, the real subversion in Laos", remarked Banning Garrett, a member of the Pacific Studies Center in Pali Alto, "has been the virtually complete takeover by the CIA of the Laotian government administration and army and the creation of an economy which is almost totally dependent on United States aid." (1)

(1) *Two, Three..... Many Vietnams* by the Editors of Ramparts with Banning Garrett and Katherine Barkley—Harper and Row 1971.

In Vientiane, the CIA operates secretly in the shadows of beautiful buildings in less frequent places. Although apparently an annex to the USAID, the CIA is an independent organ and its personnel only reports to its own head. It organizes putsches, sets up or overthrows cabinets, fosters the A.C. (Clandestine Army) and traffics opium. In 1964, to settle the conflict between Rightist generals Phoumi Nosavan and Kouprasith, it ordered the former to leave for Thailand to wait for a favourable occasion.

In recent years, Washington has augmented the number of advisors in the Vientiane military and political apparatuses, reshuffled the High Command, the General Staff and Military Region commands. Under-Secretary of State Alexis Johnson, Mc Cain, C. in C. of the US Forces in the Pacific, Thomas Moorer, Joint Chiefs of Staff... made frequent trips to Laos. In the wake of recent military setbacks, General Richard Stilwell, Deputy Chief of Staff in charge of operations in the Pacific made an aerial inspection over Long Cheng (Statement by Sisouk Na Champassak, Acting Minister of Defence of Laos, *UPI*, January 17, 1972).

2. *The Men of Saigon*

In the framework of Nixon's doctrine "to pit Asians against Asians", the White House has mobilized Saigon, Bangkok and other satellite countries. South Vietnamese mercenaries, arrogant and looting, act as "conquistadors" full of haughtiness. They run the South Vietnamese flag (of Saigon-*Pub.*) up over occupied buildings and openly demonstrate their contempt for the Cambodians. The paradox is grotesque: the same Vietnamese troops who refuse to fight in their

own country are now defending a Cambodian government which massacred their fellow Vietnamese, while they themselves massacre the Khmer people who are fighting to topple that government (Banning Garrett, *Two, Three... Many Vietnams*, Harper and Row, 1971).

"Those Cambodians are like the Mois (tribesmen living on the High Plateaux, Indochina): if you show them your weakness they will crush you, if you treat them harshly they will be under your feet,"(*) Thieu said to a guest. "In Svay Rieng, another general visited a Cambodian governor who showed him his humble submission; after the talk the general addressed the newsmen accompanying him: "There, you see, that's the way to deal with Cambodians." (*)

In face of plunderings and massacres of Cambodians the authorities react timidly. "The [Cambodian] government daily protests against the South Vietnamese embassy, but we have not received any satisfactory reply," Minister of Information Long Boret acknowledged.

Except the Operation Lam Son 719 in February and March 1971, Saigon's involvement in *Laos* has been so far less important than in Cambodia. But in order to cope with the Indochinese revolution, especially in the "three borders" area, Saigon, Vientiane and Phnom Penh used to hold secret meetings. Under the pretext of leading a military football team to Saigon for a friendly tournament, two Lao generals including Oudone Sananikone, a Department head in the Ministry of Defence

(*) Quoted from Charles Mayer's: *Derrière le Sourire Khmer*, 1971.

and ex-chief of Staff of the Lao Army, "have had many talks with the South Viet Nam High Command on the possibility of intervention by Saigon troops into Laos". (*AFP*, January 18, 1972).

3. *The Thai*

The presence of Thai troops in Laos, remarked *Reuter* on March 11, 1970, was an old thing. On the Lao chess-board, Thailand, a US springboard in Southeast Asia, was destined to a significant role by Washington. In a memorandum issued in September 1971, the Central Committee of the Lao Patriotic Front denounced three forms of Thai intervention against Laos:

a) Bangkok backs the [Vientiane] administration to "escalate" the air war against Laos by putting its airbases and pilots at the latter's disposal. Presently 80 per cent of the aircraft that drop a daily average of 3,000 tons of bombs over Laos take off from Thai airfields. About 40 B.52's set out from Utapao every day.

b) Bangkok supplies weapons and munitions to the royal forces and Vang Pao special forces through two air bridges (Bangkok — Vientiane and Udorn — Long Cheng) and strategic highways (Bangkok — Nong Khay, Udorn — Nakhorn Phanom and Udorn — Pakse). The monthly transit reaches 4,500 tons.

c) Bangkok has massively introduced its troops into Laos since Vientiane's defeat at Nam Bac (January 1968), particularly since Nixon's advent to power.

Following the meetings Phouma—Kittikachorn (December 1971) and Abrams—Kittikachorn (January 1972), Thai effectives in Laos have kept increasing.

"The arrival of Thai troops created a good deal of dissatisfaction... Laotians tend to resent the Thai, feeling that the latter act with arrogance and condescension toward them." (1) Here is the explanation by Saigon journalist Thai Phien: "Thai soldiery relies on their American bosses, so its looks down upon the Lao." (2)

In connivance with the White House, the Bangkok authorities have for long tried to sabotage Sihanouk's neutrality. Right after the March 18, 1970 coup d'etat, Bangkok alloted coup-makers five Skyraiders, 500,000 rain-coats, 20 gun-boats and widened strategic highways toward Cambodia. Lon Nol's men were sent to Thailand to be trained in counter-guerilla and jungle combat. Several training centers of "special forces" were set up by Americans in Thailand for Phnom Penh troops. Thai technicians arrived at Battambang and Siemreap to guide American and Thai bombers.

According to foreign sources, Kittikachorn went to Saigon on December 14, 1971 to discuss with Thieu the possibility of relieving the Saigon troops in case the latter were compelled to withdraw from Cambodia.

The January 19, 1972 accord on frontier co-operation between Bangkok and Phnom Penh allows Thai troops to coordinate their activities with Lon Nol soldiers in police operations and sweeps in the borderland and right on Cambodian territory.

(1) Fred Branfman, *Laos: War and Revolution* — Harper and Row, New York 1970.

(2) *Dien Tin* (Telegraph), January 21-22, 1972.

4. *Other Satellites of the US*

To put into effect its policies in Laos and Cambodia, Washington forces its satellites to make contribution.

American journalist Jack Anderson revealed that the State Department had helped the Phnom Penh "government" write a letter asking other countries to grant aid. That draft was brought out together with a telegram to the US ambassador to Cambodia.

Australia supplies Phnom Penh with planes, military advisors and receives Lon Nol's officers and men in her military school and courses. New Zealand, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea and the Philippines do the same. Malaysia devote her Kotatinggi mountainous region to the training of Lao troops for jungle combat, and of Vientiane police for methods of repression.

The Committee for Co-ordination of Studies on the Mekong lower basin held its 53rd session in Saigon (Sept. and Oct. 1971) with the participation of Phnom Penh, Vientiane, Saigon and Bangkok. An agreement was signed on so-called pilot agricultural programs financed by the US, Japan, Netherland and Great Britain under the signboard of "UNO assistance."

Is it necessary so recall that this Committee was founded in 1957 in the framework of a Mekong project worked out by the US since 1952 with a view to ousting the French after the Indochina war? The presence and the ever growing role of Japanese militarism in the Mekong project bespeak the "shock force in Asia" part that Nixon's doctrine reserves for it. In a nutshell, the Americans look

forward to setting up in the Mekong region a network of anti-communist outposts.

The baskets of crabs

The Phnom Penh and Vientiane leaders have a striking resemblance as regards their social origin, and their moral and political behaviour. Behind them are the most reactionary strata, some of them come into being in the wake of the dollar. "In the areas still held by its 'clients', the USA maintains a regime of complete corruption. The small elite who lives in luxury thanks to US hand-out, graft and corruption... does not lack goods and amenities... The US 'aid' has succeeded in corrupting the elite and drawing it into the US war". (Noam Chomsky in *Laos: War and Revolution*, Harper and Row, New York 1970). The rural masses are caught in the cogwheel of a consumer society in which the imported products exceed the purchasing power of those even above the average.

1. *The clientele of Washington*

Phnom Penh, that is the wedding of the feudal oligarchy with the comprador bourgeoisie. Some members of the royal family with Sirik Matak at its head rallied round Prince Sihanouk just to grab choice posts in the business and the army. They turned tail when their interests were at stake, ready even to abandon the monarchy. The mandarins and functionaries more or less mandarin-oriented – especially the most corrupted — have rallied round Lon Nol at the first hours of the putsch. Many among them have become big owners of coco and

rubber plantations. The comprador bourgeoisie which has grown up thanks to commercialized US aid has common interests with the Americans. It has not willingly approved Prince Sihanouk's nationalization of banking and import-export, and renunciation of US aid in 1963. Businessmen without convictions have always held many seats in the Assembly. The majority of the 1966 elected who voted the deposition of the Prince on March 19, 1970, are among the rich. At last, the superior officers have got the lion's share in the prebend (graft and sale of material, contreband...) and connived with the business.

Sisowath Sirik Matak, the mastermind of the regime, has, together with Lon Nol since 1954, supported comprador private capitalism, opposing the development of state enterprises encouraged by Sihanouk. A businessman, he is a share-holder of a thriving transit firm in Laos, works with a rich trader in Phnom Penh, and has support among foreign businessmen. Again along with Lon Nol, he concocted the plot at the time of the nationalization of banking and import-export. Appointed at his will ambassador in Tokyo, he has made contact with the swindler banker Song Sak, a CIA agent, to finalize the pro-US putsch.

Lon Nol is a militaryman with so hazy ideas that the US authorities want to give him a protocol job and put Sirik Matak in his place (*AP*, January 14, 1972). His call to a war of religion bespeaks his mind: "Buddhism ought to last 5,000 years. We are not in the 2,500th year of this era. Therefore, the present

war is, according to prediction, a war of religion" (May 11, 1970).

Son Ngoc Thanh is an adventurer who has successively served the Japanese (as prime minister), the French (tentatively as leader of the Khmer Issarak pseudo-movement) and the Americans. Taking refuge in Thailand, he has founded the Khmer Serei movement financed and armed by the CIA.

The *Vientiane* administration supplies an equally picturesque galery of portraits, diehard feudalists, comprador bourgeois, unscrupulous politicians, warlords Kuomintang style, dissident tribal chiefs, all of them thirsty for US manna. Back to the years 50's, the import program based on US aid was a lucrative business for the *Lao* elite. Wrote the *Wall Street Journal* in April 1958: "There are from 200 to 300 well-known families in Laos which can secure the maximum of profits in a very great import program. The political leaders of the Rightist faction in Laos are given a number of privileges aimed at maintaining their friendly links with the United States" (1). Since then, US aid has steadily increased. In 1968, the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (June 6) noted:

"The upper and middle classes (in the city) have no desire to give up the living standard to which many among them thanks to US aid are strongly addicted. For these 'new rich' there is no question of modifying the status quo. They think it more profitable to

(1) Quoted by Banning Garret in *Two, Three... Many Vietnams*, Harper and Row 1971.

have foreign powers scrumbling over the country than any other job". (1)

The generals hold independent fiefs in the military regions: General Ouane Ratikoune still draws his main resource from the opium traffic in the North — General Kouprasith of the powerful Abbay family owns vast lands and many commercial enterprises — General (bandit) Vang Pao will be dealt with later on. General Phoumi Nosavan waits for his hour in Thailand, living on CIA money. Prince Boun Oum lords over the Fourth Military Region, domain of his family, Na Champassak; he makes huge profits from his tin mines, transport and aviation companies, clandestine trade in weapons. The Sananikone clan, the Rockefellers of Laos, dominates the political and economic activities: it numbers a president of the Assembly, (Phoui Sananikone), several deputies, generals and many representatives at all echelons of the army and the administration.

Prince Souvanna Phouma, who has proclaimed his divorce with neutralism by letting the Americans bomb his country in 1964, has thoroughly shifted to the Right under US pressure. Douglas F. Dowd who has interviewed him in his elegant, air-conditioned American style ranch house in Vientiane, has concluded: "a man very aloof toward his people, toward his land, Souvanna has been sanitized, pacified, in short, Americanized."(2)

1) Quoted by Banning Garrett in *Two, Three... Many Vietnams*, Harper and Row 1971.

2) *Laos: War and Revolution*, Harper and Row 1971.

2. *The political mess*

Souvanna Phouma has not hid his obedience to Washington. "The Nixon administration and the other US officials understand the difficult task of my government," he stated upon his return from USA (October 2, 1971), stressing the importance of US aid. More explicit still, Sirik Matak "had expressed his deep gratitude to the USA for her 'generous' aid. This aid has enabled us to survive until now." *AFP*, August 10, 1971). To survive in the conditions of an untold anarchy. After having overthrown the monarchy, Lon Nol has established a republic conceived as a predestinated institution. "This 'holy war' must end one of these days. This day will see the Republic thrive, always according to the predictions which foresee that many countries will fight on the side of Buddhist Cambodia." (Appeal of May 11, 1970). The reveries and other stupidities of this "Phnom Penh mayor" throw such a discredit on the regime that the White House thinks to replace him. Each Khmer "lobby" has its pet. The scramble for power and prebend grows ever fiercer.

While Lon Nol, put down by a fit a paralysis, got himself cured in Honolulu (January 1971), Sirik Matak and Son Ngoc Thanh cut the ground from under his feet. Hardly convalescent, the patient hurriedly returned to try and take the situation in hand. After harsh bargaining, he was appointed "marshal", promoted "national hero" and again nominated prime minister. But actual power is held by Sirik Matak. This agreement of May 6, 1971 has satisfied nobody.

Dissensions again flared up in July. The "Assembly" voted against Khung Thay Ly, minister of economy, and questioned Sok Chhong, second vice-premier in charge of finance and trade. The first vice-premier, minister of interior, was dismissed. In Tam, one of the instigators of the March 18, putsch, lost his star of general.

Things grew worse, Mc Cain, Commander in Chief of the US Forces in the Pacific had to come and reprimand the "boys" and threaten to cut off the "aid" should they do not make peace.

On US order, "Head of State" Cheng Heng proclaimed the dissolution of the "Assembly" to institute a constituent, leaving the "government" free to administer by decrees. The Cabinet was reshuffled in favour of Sirik Matak (*Reuter*, October 20 1971). Brigadier general Theppana Ngum, a US placeman, received as many as six portfolios: interior, security, justice, agriculture, public works and rural affairs.

According to *Radio Manila* (October 20), Lon Nol declared that "many factions are trying to divide the country". He did not hide his intention to establish a military dictature, for he was fed up with "this sterile democratic play". Therefore, Cheng Heng's resignation as Head of State (March 10, 1972) came as no surprise.

Vientiane is also torn by internal dissensions. The government controls only 13 out of 16 provincial towns, district townlets and some outposts. These urban centers seem to swim in a no man's land. The central administration has no influence upon the five military regions where rule the military command and the seigneurial families. As there exists a US parallel government,

the royal functionaries have nothing to do. According to the Lao journalist Bun Thang, the ministers, vice-ministers, heads of service just go to work for some minutes, half an hour at most, to sign papers. They can even abstain from this formality. The bigwigs are thus free to go to the UNO from time to time or spend some months in the USA. There they go to deliver speeches prepared by American experts and control their bank accounts. Of course, if they stay in Laos they can without any inconvenient absent themselves from their office for days on end so as not to leave their gambling or their mistresses!

Profound divergences oppose the south, domain of the ultra-rightists, and the north (Vientiane). The Americans who had begun to back the ultra-rightists of General Phoumi Nosavane (South) against Phouma for a certain time neutralist, soon realized the ineffectiveness of such a policy. So they have manoeuvred Phouma into their orbit and used him to try and rally all pro-US factions.

A struggle now secret now open has continued between the different factions. The Sananikone (Vientiane) clan has retired General Ouane Ratikoune, Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Forces (August 1971) and reorganized the High Command. The Phoumi Nosavan attempted a putsch mounted from Thailand (April 1971). Phoui Sananikone, president of the Assembly and Prince Boum Oum Na Champassak came to grips with each other, which accounted for the redistribution of posts in the High Command and the General Staff: Boun Pone

Markthepharak usurped Ouane Ratikoune's place — the former commander of the Fourth Military Region, Phasouk, replaced Oudone Sananikone as Chief of Staff — Thong Lit relieved Kouprasith as Commander of the Fifth Military Region. Sisouk Na Champassak, 44 years old, minister of Finances, was appointed Phouma's representative at the Ministry of Defence. Thanks to these moves, the Lower Laos clan controlled the key posts (Ministry of Defence, High Command, General Staff, Finances).

The conflict between the Sisouk Na Champassak clan (South) and that of Phoui Sananikone exacerbated when on US order the former devaluated the "kip" (from 500 to 600 a dollar). The second, hit in his interests, was however unable to mobilize the Assembly against this measure.

Elections were held in January 1972 to harmonize the interests of different groups. This farce met with many reticences. On December 17, 1971, 14 candidates withdrew their names for the electoral organization lacked democracy. Several groups boycotted the voting and denounced the intervention of the US embassy. *AFP* cabled from Vientiane on February 7, 1972 that the Phoui Sananikone faction had burnt the ballots for Humphan Sayasith so as to pitchfork Phoui into third place. Boum Oum Na Champassak was accused for having put into the polling-boxes new cards to be elected in Champassak. "The electoral campaign was very lukewarm, almost secret. In Vientiane town, only one candidate had a direct contact with the population" (*AFP*). The elections returns gave predominance to the

army and the police with 23 representatives, among them five generals. Prince Phouma suffered a new setback.

3. *The economic depression*

"Cambodia's economy has fallen into disaster," exclaimed Lon Nol on July 6, 1971, more than a year after his putsch. The country produced annually three million tons of rice and 50,000 tons of rubber, a great part of which was exported. Today rubber production is almost stopped and that of rice decreased so much that one has to import each year hundreds of thousands of tons besides wheat and other food for the population's needs.

According to the Phnom Penh paper *Ekareach* (June 17, 1971), "the Khmer resources fall into decay. Tens of thousands of head of cattle have been slaughtered by the war or drafted (slaughtered by bombing and drafted by the aggressors and their valets — *Pub*). Land remains uncultivated. Agricultural and industrial production is almost nil. Trade is in an impasse."

Sirik Matak himself acknowledged : "All this has dealt a heavy blow at our economy." (*Le Monde*, December 3, 1971). Before the "Assembly" minister Tim Nguon admitted that foreign trade had registered a deficit of four billion riels (July 5, 1971). Phnom Penh has decreed various measures to try and "stabilize" her finances, the more so as the war cost steadily increases. In November 1971, Sok Chhong, second vice-premier, in charge of economy put forward a program

with "the least painful measures to improve the difficult situation." The riel, dependent upon the dollar, was depreciated by 300 per cent (from 55 to 140 riels a dollar—400 in the free market). The inflation triggered an augmentation of one billion riels in paper-money within a month. The "government" issued all kinds of credit bonds to compel the population to lend money. However, budgetary deficit approached ten billion riels (*Le Figaro*, December 26, 1971) for the planned expenditure (14 billion) might go up to 18.7 billion (an increase of 64 per cent due to war cost increment).

One month after the implementation of "the least painful measures", Sok Chhong himself declared : "We still have to face two problems: first, the lack of currency for the importations, second, the shortage of goods in the whole country." The price of rice doubled, that of other goods rocketed.

"Cambodia entirely depends for her survival on US aid. The brilliant organization on paper is another far cry from the realities on the terrain. At the level of the province and the district, there is practically nothing." (*Le Monde*, December 26, 1971).

A strange result, brought about by the US aid which amounted to 285 million dolars in 1970 and 341 million in 1971 !

US aid produces the same devastating effect in Laos as in Cambodia. We have somewhat dealt with it above. "The USA really supports the whole economy (of Laos)," said a report of the US Congress Senatorial Commission as far back as 1959.

Formerly a granary of rice, Laos has to buy it now. In 1971, the rice-growing areas south of Road 9 (Savannakhet, Champassak harvested tens of thousands of tons of rice less than in 1970, which itself had not brought in much.

The budget is in constant deficit owing to the war burden : 3. 5 billion *kip* in 1971, according to Sisouk Na Champassak.

On November 8, 1971, Vientiane had to devaluate the *kip* by 20 per cent, obeying an American order to make it dependent upon the dollar (from 500 kip a dollar to 600, and even 700 or more in the black market). This monetary conversion triggered a price hike : the price of a kilogram of fish rose from 300 to 700 *kip*, that of a taxi drive doubled (from 50 to 100 *kip*). 170 articles cost from 20 to 120 per cent dearer. According to the Vientiane paper *Sieng Serei* (November 23, 1971): " Many shops dare no longer buy goods, Thai traders dare send no more goods, and the currency exchange notably dwindles. The price of petrol increases by 13 per cent, that of goods in the Vientiane market by 50 per cent, that of goods in the shops by 40 per cent in average. There is a general discontent among the Vientiane population following the deterioration of the economic situation, " concluded *AFP* in November 1971.

The presidential war

After the US intervention in Cambodia which constitutes an anomaly to his own doctrine, Nixon has

returned to a more typically neo-colonialist strategy comprising three factors :

1. a massive air war
2. a ground war waged by Asian troops
3. the forced exodus of the population.

These tactics help allay the exasperation of the American opinion concerning the involvement of the " boys " in ground operations. They are aimed to strike at the people, support of the national-liberation war, to isolate the partisans from the people, to separate the " fish " from the " water ".

The air war

Centrepiece of the " Khmerization " and " Laosization " as well as of the " Vietnamization ", the air war is a solid prop to the puppet troops while enabling the USA to withdraw its GIs or keep them from commitment. At the same time and in the first place, it must help counter-guerilla. What the *Washington Post* correspondent T.D. Allman wrote on Laos on this matter (*New York Times*, October 1st, 1969) can be applied to Cambodia and South Viet Nam :

" The main United States targets are the rebel economy and social fabric... The bombing, by creating refugees, deprives the communists (i.e. the revolutionary militants — *Pub.*) of their chief source of food and transport... Besides, it would be difficult to fight a people's war with fewer and fewer people. "

The air war is carried on in Laos in a systematic manner, with the rigour of a macabre logic. It constitutes the essential element of the US war in Laos, a

war which must, according to Fred Branfman (1), serve as a pattern of warfare likely to become the model for all future attempt to fight localized guerilla conflicts, because it is discreetly waged by the President, without Congress supervision and popular knowledge (2).

Over the past seven years, at least two million tons of US bombs have been dropped on Lao areas peopled with one million inhabitants, that is an average of two tons per capita. This tonnage which costs from five to ten billion dollars — the present yearly average is two billion — is equivalent to that released by the USAF on Europe and the Pacific throughout the Second World War. 50,000 Americans from bases in Thailand, South Viet Nam, Guam and the Seventh Fleet participate in the bombing. T.28, F.105, F.86, F.4, *Cessna* and even B.52, all types of aircraft are involved.

The bombing began in 1964. It was aimed to strike at the supply arteries, troop concentration centres and to cover Vientiane units. However, these targets cannot be hit, for the popular forces moving in thick jungle cannot be spotted. So the objectives of the bombing were changed: the aim is now to demoralize the civilian population, deny to the Pathet Lao food, carriers, soldiers, arms-caches, safe regrouping centers, to disrupt the daily life, trade and economy of the liberated areas.

1. In *Laos: War and Revolution* —Harper and Row 1970.

2. As there are no ground forces involved, public opinion is not alarmed and the Americans have only an incomplete idea about the gravity of the US action in Laos after the disclosure of Senator Symington's report (1969).

The US effort is particularly directed against the northeast (from the southern fringe of the Plain of Jars to the frontier with the DRVN: about 200,000 inhabitants) and the southeastern mountainous areas (about 250,000 inhabitants).

According to T. D. Allman, November 1968 marks the beginning of the all-out US air war against Laos: "The most significant development in the recent history of the Laotian war came in November 1968, when the full might of the US air arsenal — previously concentrated in North Viet Nam — was turned on Laos and the trail..." Over the last years, the USAF frantically hit villages and urban centers, lobbing 500-lb bombs, delayed-action bombs, napalm, phosphorus bombs, spraying chemical products on crops and forests.

"I could not repress a muffled cry of surprise," exclaimed the Lao journalist Kham Thanh (1). This tiny village where scarcely a dozen households were living had been showered with hundreds of heavy bombs by the Yankee aggressors.

"That's not all, friend," Bun Khang told me. "In half a moment we'll arrive at Ta Cuoi village on the other side. There 28 people were killed in a single American raid. You'll see with your own eyes that most of old villages around here have become targets of American bombings..."

A Vietnamese journalist has jotted down in his travel notebook:

(1) *Viet Nam Courier*, May 31, 1971.

"One sunny day, an OV-10 spotter from Thailand flew over the Paksong-Pakse road. Down below, everything had been charred: villages, forests, coffee plantations; only a house had been left standing after B. 52 raid, but this time it was not spared: the spy plane fired a smoke shell and three F.4 jets roared in and erased the thing from the maps." (1)

The tactic of "saturation bombing" (all-out bombing) Laos style is introduced into Cambodia, especially after the withdrawal of GIs. Snuol, Mimot, Krek, other towns and many villages are wiped out off the map. Alarmed by the US involvement in Cambodia, under public pressure, the US Senate reacts against Nixon. The Church-Cooper amendment to the budget bill cuts the credit required by the US military operations in Cambodia after June 30, 1970, date of withdrawal of the US aggressor forces. However, it maintains the financing of the air activities allegedly to "protect the US troops". Thus is open the door to genocide and ecocide.

The ground war by proxy

Applying his Guam doctrine (July 1969), Nixon "pit Asians against Asians" in Cambodia and Laos with US aid (maximum US material and minimum US personnel). The strategy of "special war" nonetheless receives different versions according to the conditions of each country.

In Cambodia, the Pentagon has striven to rapidly strengthen the Pnom Penh army. During a press conference, the US Defence Secretary Melvin Laird has

(1) *Viet Nam Courier*, September 6, 1971.

remarked that the latter beats the record of growth in the history of armies in the world for it has grown from 30,000 to 210,000 within a short period. The Americans also train "special forces" like those of Vang Pao in Laos. They add to Lon Nol troops thousands of Khmer Serei and Khmer Krom. Mention has been made of the military alliance between Phnom Penh, Saigon and Bangkok.

These heterogeneous troops fighting under the banner of the dollar resemble one another as mercenaries thirsty for plunder, murder and destruction.

After the passage of Lon Nol troops, here is the state of things at Kompong Thmar:

"Coconut trees, sugar-palm trees and areca trees are burnt down. Their charred and truncated stems hardly stand above the cement columns spared by the fire on the roadside. Two people have been killed while returning home, two others for having passed by a soldier's corpse. A family has got two children shot down without any reason." (*AKI*)

The Khmer Krom and Khmer Serei outwit the Lon-Nol troops in cruelty. Nicknamed "beaters", the Khmer Serei have been notorious for their banditry and contraband. They have formed gangs of pirates who launch raids from the Thai border.

The Saigon troops behave as in conquered territory. One day, after a raid against Chup plantation, the men of the 333rd tactical group displayed before their "allies" a booty captured from the "communists" (watches, fountain pens, transistors, pull-overs, shoes,

looking-glasses...) Upon seeing it, two Lon Nol soldiers fell into sobs: one recognized the transistor he had offered his mother, and the other the engraved looking-glass he had presented to his fiancée. It was in March 1971. On July 31, 1971, Lieutenant Nu Mum in Kompong Trabek district declared to a *Reuter* correspondent: "The Saigon troops have penetrated up to 16 km into Khmer territory; more than 5,000 of our peasants have had to leave their homes, our women have been raped and the gold in our pagodas plundered." Similar scenes take place every day.

For their part, the Thai troops control Battambang and Siemreap and let planes taking off from their territory come and destroy Cambodia. Barney Seibert, a *UPI* correspondent, cabled from Phnom Penh "From military sources, it is learnt that teams of Thai transmissions regularly call for air raids by Thai and US planes. Thailand's growing involvement in the Cambodian war remains covert, but it is well-known from all Cambodians in the areas where the Thai operate... A Thai officer trained in the USA complained that certain Cambodian officers are suspicious of both Thai and South Vietnamese troops." (August 28, 1971).

For all their efforts, the Lon Nol troops and their satellites have suffered setback upon setback.

At the threshold of 1972, "one is compelled to note this evident fact: it is the Communists (read: the Khmer national-liberation people's armed forces — *Pub.*) who have the initiative. They strike where and when they want. They even have no need to field important forces. The (puppet) Cambodian army is not

a match (for the Khmer national-liberation armed forces)." (*Le Figaro*, December 25-26, 1971).

In Laos, the military situation is far from being brilliant although the "special war" has been unprecedently stepped up. At the beginning of the 1971-1972 dry season, the people's forces recovered the whole of the Plain of Jars-Muong Soui area (December 12, 1971), destroyed Vang Pao redoubt at Sam Thong-Long Cheng (January 12, 1972), recaptured the Bolovens Plateau with Saravane, Tha Teng, Pak Song, Ban Nhik (December 1971-January 1972).

The Pentagon's electronic brains have worked out several strategic devices which have been foiled one after the other: "Vientiane troops + US artillery and logistics", "special forces+US artillery and logistics", "Thai mercenaries + special forces + US artillery and logistics".

Since the end of the First Indochina War (1954) to the Nam Tha disaster (May 1962) which led to the signing of the Geneva Accords, the major goal of the Americans consisted in turning the Lao police force into a Lao "national army" to defend the towns and military bases. Its strength was brought from 15,000 50,000.

But the Vientiane troops have increasingly displayed their weakness and deficiency. Former US ambassador to Laos William Sullivan has stated before the US Senate: "The principal military shortcoming in Laos is leadership. Senior officers are often selected on the basis of family, wealth or political connections. They

tend to have limited training or experience." Said Colonel Khambou, 39 years old and 20 years of service, to Nguyen Vu, correspondent of the Saigon paper *Tin Sang* who interviewed him on Road 23: "They (my soldiers) only think to their families and entertainments. Our Royal Army (Vientiane Army — *Pub.*) will never be able to defeat the Communists (read: people's forces—*Pub*). The latter are ready to make all sacrifices while on our side the superiors are corrupted and pleasure-seeking, the inferiors too poor and without an ideal have no mood to fight." (*Tin Sang*, Saigon, January 22, 1972).

On trial, the Vientiane troops have shown so little enthusiasm in combat that Washington has been compelled to reinforce them by more dynamic elements in creating on the one hand the "Clandestine Army" and introducing on the other Thai units.

The Clandestine Army (AC) put under the command of bandit general Vang Pao was set up, maintained and commanded by the CIA. It is destined to be a shock force after the defeat of the Vientiane army at Nam Bak (1968). These US "special forces" have a core of 5,000 *Meo* militiamen left behind by the French after their withdrawal from Laos. Besides the *Meo*, a minority living on the high peaks, they include other "legionaries" recruited among the *Kha* in Lower Laos, the Khmers, the Thai, the Filipinos and the Chiang Kai-shek troops. Their strength, mostly constituted of *Meo*,

went from 12,000 in 1962 to about 30,000 in 1971 (35.000 according to a *UPI* despatch of June 3, 1970). They are broken down into BS (special battalions of 400 men each) and BG (guerilla battalions of 200 men each), mustered in GM (mobile group) during large-scale operations. For guerilla activities, they operate in preference in mobile small units (platoon, company), attacking when in force, withdrawing when in disadvantageous posture. The AC soldier is better paid than that of Vientiane (the former receives 30-35 dollars a month while the second 6-10 dollars). His family is supplied with food and clothes. US advisers are present in all units and even in far-away bases. They depend upon a US base set up in Udorn (Thailand) and codenamed HQ 333, headquarters of the US Green Berets (1).

Vang Pao's "boss" is "Mister Pop" (Edgar "Pop" Buell). This strange volunteer of the IVS (International Voluntary Service), an ex-farmer of Indiana, has carried out an agitation work among the *Meo* in Xieng Khouang since the first 60's. He has feverishly striven, by land and by air, to rally the *Meo* around Vang Pao. In 1962, he trained a group of *Meo* sappers to blow up bridges on Road 7 near Ban Ban. He works for the USAID and the CIA.

Bandit Vang Pao, of low descent, was a sergeant in the French colonial army. He owes his ascendance to

1. Robert Shaplen, *Time out of Hand*.

French support during the years 50's, to his alliance with the *Meo* tribal chief Touby Ly Fong and to US backing since the years 60's. He sets up " the capital of the *Meo* Kingdom " at Long Cheng, a great military base built by the Americans in a valley 4 km long by 2 km wide, comprising a staff sector, an information center, a police sector, Vang Pao's residence, the quarter of US advisers (about one hundred), a telecommunications station, an airfield, and an artillery field, storages, not to mention civilian sectors for 40,000 Meo soldiers' dependents and forced " evacuees ".

However, the AC has suffered a high toll of lives. " Mister Pop " acknowledged as far back as 1969 that Vang Pao had lost at least one thousand killed since January 1, and all but one of his commanders. " A short time ago we rounded up 300 fresh recruits. 30 percent were 14 years old or less, and ten of them were only ten years old. Another 30 percent were 15 or 16. The remaining 40 percent were 35 or over. Where were the ones between? I'll tell you — they're all dead. In a few weeks, 90 percent of these little kids will be killed." (1)

This explains the repeated setbacks of the " Special Forces" which have lost 7,000 men during the 1968-1969 dry season, over 10,000 men during the 1969-1970 dry season, 4,000 during the 1971 rainy season. On January 10, 1972, the Lao People's Armed Forces demolished Sam Thong base and on January 12, put out of action

1. Robert Shaplen, *Time out Hand*, Harper Colophon 1970.

nearly 1,000 men of the " Special Forces " and Thai troops, liberating Long Cheng. This is a blow of strategical and political significance at the Americans and their Clandestine Army.

The Thai units, another US strategic force in Laos, do not give a better account of themselves in face of the people's offensive. They have been introduced since 1963 by Washington, with two tasks: of short and long duration. They must, on one hand, contribute by their artillery and infantry to the defence of strategic points, on the other train themselves in counter-guerilla to draw experiences and apply them later on a large scale in Thailand itself.

The Thai troops have conveyed a poor idea of their military value, particularly for the negative renown they have got in South Viet Nam: their division stationed in Long Thanh, instead of shielding the US Long Binh garrison, has had to be taken in protection by the GIs. Late in 1969, the Thai had 5,000 men in Laos (1). This figure has now risen to 30,000 with 26 battalions. The Thai have participated in large-scale operations (Kou Kiet: August 1969 - February 1970 — operation against the Plain of Jars from June to December 1971 — defence of Sam Thong - Long Cheng: December 1971 - January 1972...) and have coordinated their action with the Vientiane troops and special forces in middle-scale operations. At the beginning of the

1) According to the Saigon paper *Dien Tin* January 21-22, 1972.

1971-1972 dry season, they suffered heavy losses in the Plain of Jars (five infantry battalions and two artillery battalions annihilated, two infantry battalions gravely decimated, hundreds of men put out of action at Sam Thong - Long Cheng).

The forced exodus of the population

The "forced-draft urbanization", tested in South Viet Nam, is applied in Laos and Cambodia. The all-out air war and the continual ground mopping-up operations constitute the two jaws of an infernal pincer which drive the people to a tragic exodus.

In Laos, where "saturation bombing" began since late 1968 (27,000 sorties each month under Nixon), there are 700,000 refugees for a population of three million inhabitants. Millions of airdropped leaflets explain that the only way of survival consists in taking refuge in concentration camps, maintained by US dole. That is the resurrection of the idea of "strategic hamlets" notorious in South Viet Nam. The helicopters swoop with their detachments of commandos upon the peasants in the fields to capture them, pitilessly shooting at those fleeing.

In September 1969, some 50,000 people were evacuated from the Plain of Jars to Vientiane, between 3,000 and 5,000 transferred from Muong Phine to Seno. After the *American Report* (October 1, 1971) the Sam Thong - Long Cheng area became an important regroupment center of *Meo*. By 1970, about 250,000 *Meo* or related

people were moved there — the area had only from 20,000 to 30,000 *Meo* in the first years 60 — while between 50,000 and 100,0000 there were displaced toward the east and the west, sometimes in the low valleys where they were not accustomed to live. By corruption and coercion the men were forced to join the Clandestine Army and allowed to bring along their wives and children, hence a huge colony of civilians near the barracks. These civilians are regarded as goods, hostages to be kept away from the Pathet Lao at any cost. Thus, in January 1970, the revolutionary forces prepare a counter-offensive in the Plain of Jars that the Vang Pao mercenaries had no enthusiasm to defend: feeling the battle lost the CIA hastened to evacuate aboard C.130s twenty-odd thousand inhabitants regrouped in villages around Sam Thong - Long Cheng.

Given the intensity of the bombing and the multiplication of raids in Cambodia, Nixon will likely follow the same way there. From March 18, 1970 to late November, 1971, over two million Cambodians were compelled to leave their homes at diverse periods since the war spread to their country in spring 1970 (after the *New York Times* of December 5, 1971).

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The Americans have not wanted any neutralism on the Indochinese peninsula. They have succeeded in sabo-

taging Lao and Khmer neutrality, hoping to find an oultet for their Viet Nam war and improve their positions in Southeast Asia.

But they have reaped two other Viet Nams along with insuperable difficulties caused by the national and popular resistance.

Since 1965 they have put all the Indochinese countries to fire by introducing en masse GIs in South Viet Nam, launching an air and naval "escalation" against North Viet Nam, stepping up the "special war" in Laos and multiplying provocations against Cambodia. Five years later, with the Phnom Penh putsch, they have fanned up a real second Indochina war.

As Indochina is a single and same battlefield, Nixon carries out a single and same goal: to crush the Indochinese peoples united in the same front in order to achieve his neo-colonialist aims. "Khmerization" and "Laosization" spring from the same principles as set by Melvin Laird, US secretary of defence, to "Vietnamization": "This requires a stronger administration, a stronger economy, stronger military forces, and stronger police for internal security. To achieve these, limited Americans upport in all forms will still be necessary (1)."

What then are worth the "saturation bombing", the war waged by the Asians in the place of GIs, the forced-draft urbanization, the electoral machinations,

(1) Robert Thompson, *Revolutionary War in World Strategy*, Taplinger, New York 1970.

the systematic corruption and other tactics devised by Nixon?

Former US ambassador to Laos Charles Yost thinks in a disillusioned way:

"Since seven years of massive intervention have not enabled the United States to obtain a favourable result in Viet Nam, it is not in carrying on the military aid and the escalation of bombing that they will get a favourable result in Cambodia and in Laos!" (quoted by *Le Monde*, January 28, 1972).

1971, a nefarious year for Nixon

B.T. HUNG

An indefinite involvement

In the 1968 electoral campaign, Nixon promised to his electors to bring a rapid end to the Viet Nam war and stabilize the economic and social situation in the country.

The 1969 conjuncture offered him great possibilities to meet in a short time this imperious requirement of the American people: to withdraw all US troops from Viet Nam. However, he has effected this withdrawal with a deliberate procrastination by phasing it over several years, so that the US strength left behind at the beginning of 1972 still numbers more shan 120,000 men. According to a late statement of the White House, by May 1, 1972 there will remain 69,000 American soldiers in South Viet Nam, not counting the troops serving on the aircraft-carriers of the Seventh Fleet operating along Viet Nam's coast.

Nobody knows exactly how many GIs will be evacuated from South Viet Nam in the coming phases of the withdrawal, but it is certain that Nixon wants

to keep there a residual force for an indefinite period. The US President, therefore, is not in the least inclined to stop the US aggressive war in Indochina, far from that.

By advocating a "Vietnamization" of the war which aims at reducing American losses, Nixon, at first, has succeeded to some extent in fostering illusions in certain sectors of the American public. Many, however, have seen through this criminal intention.

General Mathew B. Ridgway, one of the "heroes" of the Korean war (1950-1953) who had supported this "Vietnamization" policy, recently declared: "For my part I must conclude that so long as the US armed forces remain on the mainland of South Viet Nam, that so long as we retain a residual force there, if only to provide logistical support for the South Vietnamese army (ARVN), our men will be mortared, shelled, or otherwise attacked, and that so long as they are attacked they will counterattack with fire and movement, and the war will drag on, not end". (*Foreign Affairs*, July 1971).

Commented AP: "Despite new troops cut to be announced (...), a residual force will remain in South Viet Nam along with US air support based in Thailand and flown from navy carriers. Americans will still be killing Asian people and being killed themselves."

On behalf of one thousand GIs in South Viet Nam who signed a petition sent to the US Congress to protest against Nixon's Viet Nam policy, James Mohler

declared: "I think it is obvious the residual force is barely an excuse for a continual US air war, under the guise of protecting American lives." Said Democrat Senator Birch Bayh of Indiana: "It is a cruel hoax to create the belief that our prisoners will be returned before we end our involvement in the war."

Let us now listen to Colonel David H. Hackworth. This officer of the US Special Forces who has served in Viet Nam since 1961 is one of the most decorated American militarymen. He has performed many worthy "feats of arms" and has summed up his "combat experiences" in *Viet Nam Primer* to help those who want to "defeat the Viet Cong". Promoted to be a major general, this man so far a warlike and greedy for honours, has recently declined this offer and asked to leave the army to oppose Nixon's "Vietnamization" of the war policy. Said he to the press: "I was an extreme hawk — a real super aggressive, air-borne-all-the-way, let's-go-get-the-dirty-communist-type. But later after seeing the enemy and watching ARVN perform, I concluded: No, we shouldn't have gotten in. It was just an absolute waste... This is a no-win war. 'Vietnamization' is a word which must be a product of Madison Avenue. It's a public relations dream. I haven't seen an improvement in ARVN." (*Newsweek*, July 5, 1971).

The above-mentioned statements together with many comments last year in the American and Western press have dealt hard blows at the argumentation in favour of the "Vietnamization" policy claimed by Nixon as

the only correct measure to extricate the USA from the Viet Nam war.

Late in 1971, a Harris poll showed that among the people asked to give their opinion throughout the USA, 55 percent stood against the maintenance by the Nixon administration of an occupation force in South Viet Nam; 57 per cent were against US air support to the Saigon puppet troops; 70 per cent protested against the continuation of military aid to the Saigon puppet administration; 53 per cent deemed that the tempo of troop withdrawal made by Nixon is too slow; 62 per cent demanded that Nixon withdraw all US troops from Indochina in May 1972 at the latest.

Meanwhile, the aggressive war drags on in Indochina with its colossal expenditure, its unheard of crimes stigmatized by the whole mankind, its disastrous effects on US economy, finance and society in full crisis. It has been borne out in a recent study by the Committee on Foreign Relations of the US Senate that the implementation of the "Vietnamization" plan in the last three years has required direct military spending to the tune of 67,150 million dollars, and incremental war costs to the tune of 51 billion dollars, which add up to 118,150 million dollars, not to mention the grants to the Saigon administration as "economic aid" or "indirect spending". (1)

(1) Budget war costs (direct military spending):

1969	28,8000	million
1970	23,050 —	
1971	15,300 —	
Total	67,150	million

It appears from another survey of the Cornell University in the USA that under the Nixon administration there were dropped on Indochina in 1969-1971 31,000 tons of bombs more than under the Johnson administration during the four previous years while the bombing against North Viet Nam has been considerably reduced.

American opinion is more and more convinced as witness this apt remark of American professor Gabriel Kolko:

"... Careful observers of official American statements and actions can scarcely be under misconceptions, for the cultivated illusion of the Nixon administration that the President indeed has a 'plan', for which he requires public and Congressional patience, is belied by what the record shows to be a quite deliberate policy of protracted US military activity in Indochina and a will to sustain the war and the US presence there indefinitely." (*Le Monde diplomatique*, October 1971)

Such is also the conclusion of the *New York Times* after the extraordinary press conference on the Viet

Incremental war costs (which represent the net difference between war-time and peace-time needs — W. Fulbright):

1969	22,000	million
197	17,000	—
1971	12,000	—
Total	51,000	million

(Source: "Impact of the Viet Nam war", Special report prepared for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate by the Foreign Affairs Division Congressional Research Service — Library of Congress, June 30, 1971).

Nam problem held by Nixon on November 12, 1971: "Nixon's developing Viet Nam's strategy increases the risk of indefinite American involvement in unending Indochina war".

A protracted economic and financial crisis

Despite his customary trick to deceive public opinion, Nixon cannot escape the disastrous consequences, purely objective, of his bellicose policy.

The colossal spending required by the aggressive war in Viet Nam (200 billion dollars, after W. Fulbright) and the arms race (1,000 billion dollars since 1964, after "The Budget in Brief", US Government Printing Office) has sharpened the economic contradictions in the USA, steadily aggravating the inflation and the economic crisis.

On the threshold of 1971 the USA was faced with the following situation: over 10,000 bankruptcy cases, 2.3 million unemployed more than in 1969, industry working at 76.5 per cent capacity production (as against 87.8 per cent in 1969); average rate of inflation 5.9 per cent (compared with 5.4 per cent in 1969); living cost 6.7 per cent up in comparison with 1967; dollar depreciation by 5.7 per cent; increasing deficit in the budget and the balance of international payments.

To do away with this state of thing, Nixon has proposed to the US Congress and the American people "six great objectives," followed with concrete measures to achieve them and dangled the prospect of a "new

prosperity with more jobs, more income, more benefits without inflation and war." (State of the Union message, January 22, 1971). However, about six months later the economic situation was aggravated. Many more industrial enterprises had gone bankrupt (900-1,000 cases each month in the average) while those still working ran at 73 - 73.2 per cent of their capacity; the ranks of unemployed continued to swell (1,100,000 up in June 1971 as against the previous month).

On July 28, the Government made known the budgetary deficit of the 1970-1971 fiscal year: 23.242 billion dollars. If the deficits of the previous years under the Nixon administration are added, one gets the record figure since the end of the Second World War: 54 billion. Never has the American budget since Nixon been balanced (1).

Mention should be made that had not been for the steady increase of public loan the budgetary deficits

1) Here are the figures of the budgetary deficit under various American administrations since the end of the Second World War.

Under the H. Truman administration (1946 - 1953): 5 years of surplus, 3 years of deficit totalling 1.6 billion dollars;

Under the D. Eisenhower administration (1954 - 1961): 3 years of surplus, 5 years of deficit totalling 15.7 billion dollars;

Under the J. Kennedy administration (1962 - 1964): not a year of surplus, total deficit: 17.8 billion dollars;

Under the L. Johnson administration (1965 - 1968): 4 successive years of deficit totalling 36.1 billion dollars;

(*US News and World Report*, July 16, 1971).

would be much greater. According to the figures published by the US Department of Treasury, the amount of bonds issued during the 1970 - 1971 fiscal year reached 399,474,599, 545. 43 dollars, that is 26.5 billion dollars more than the previous year. This is a record figure for the post-war period. Consequently, the rate of inflation was brought to 6 per cent, which triggered a parallel and continual rise of the living cost: 14.8 per cent up in late June 1971 as against 1969, and 21.5 per cent as against 1967.

For the first time since 1893, there was an excess of imports over exports in foreign trade: 44.4 billion dollars of exports vs 45.1 billion dollars of imports in the first half of 1971, that is a deficit of 0.7 billion in the trade balance. For the same period, the balance of international payments showed a deficit of 11.3 billion, the highest so far. The dollar currency in the hands of foreign countries reached a peak of 51.9 billion while the US gold reserve went down to 11.9 billion early in 1970, then 10.9 billion in March 1971, and 9.7 billion in August 1971, less than one sixth of the paper dollar in circulation. The depreciation of the dollar was inevitable. Since May 1971 the price of gold on the international market stood at over 40 dollars an ounce and went up in some days to 44 or 45 dollars. Given the official parity set by the USA —35 dollars per ounce— the dollar thus lost about 28 per cent of its value.

In face of this grave situation, on August 15, 1971 Nixon had to hurriedly put forward a "new economic policy". Of the "six great objectives" previously set, there remained but three: against unemployment,

against inflation and against "international speculation" Moreover, Nixon advocated eight measures to save the dollar and do away with the economic crisis. Early in 1971, he had stood for economic liberalism without any control of prices, wages and income, but now he established a control of wages and prices, beginning by a freeze for a period of 90 days. Moreover, he postponed for one year the implementation of the planned reform for welfare, cut off the administrative personnel by 5 per cent, suspended the conversion of dollars into gold, created an additional tax of 10 per cent on imports, but he abolished a 7 per cent tax on purchases of motor-cars, lowevered the tax on industrial investments to 10 per cent for the first year, then 5 per cent for the following years, etc.. After all Nixon's "new economic measures" are not aimed at solving the problems of unemployment and inflation, but at eliminating the results obtained by the workers in the struggle for wage increase and sanctioned by 400 new contracts signed with the employers since early 1971, at smothering 363 strikes which had just broken out throughout the country to claim for higher wages, and at increasing the profits of the monopolies. American economist Victor Perlo plainly said that Nixon's economic policy is purely and simply intended to "make the rich richer and the poor poorer."

Soon after Nixon had put forward his "new economic policy", the Union for a Radical Economic Policy organized during a whole week several teach-ins attended by 260 American economists. The discussions ended in a consensus that "President Nixon's new eonomic measures are an attempt to make working

people bear the cost of economic stabilization". In fact the burden of the crisis lays heavy on the American toilers while American economy cannot be stabilized. 1971 ended in the following picture: unemployment and inflation stood over 6 per cent above the average rate, workers' real wage reduced by over 7 per cent, compared with the time Nixon had come to power; continual decrease of industrial production at the average rate of 6 to 7 per cent, with the factories working at 75 per cent of their capacity (55 per cent only for the steel branch in the last term); great difficulties in the business, with the Dow Jones index falling at 793.88 points (that is 87.03 points lower than at the launching of Nixon's new economic policy); aggravation of the budgetary deficit (38 8 billion dollars for the 1971 - 1972 fiscal year according to the estimates of the Nixon administration).

On the international market, the dollar continues to be depreciated: in the last days of December 1971, the price of gold rose in London up to 43.125 dollars an ounce; in Hong Kong 44.77 dollars; in Frankfurt, 46 dollars; and in January 1972 it went up in some days to 48 dollars in London or Zurich. In 1971 the deficit of the US balance of international payments amounted to 31 billion, that is three times the figure of 1970, and in the foreign trade to 2,3 billion, a new high in the USA.

This grave situation made George Meany, president of the AFL-CIO cry out: "We have no confidence in President Nixon's ability to run the economy." As for the president of the United Auto Workers Trade Union

he could not contain his indignation: "They (the Nixon administration) are declaring war on labour, and if they want war, they can have war."

The Anti-US Front in the world

Nixon's "new economic policy" and "Vietnamization of the war" are not only sharply criticized in the USA but also vehemently condemned the world over.

The fact that the USA has suspended the conversion of dollars into gold, created an additional tax of 10 per cent on importation, imposed upon other countries the re-evaluation of their own currency without accepting to devaluate the US dollar, all these measures have exacerbated the contradictions between the USA and its allies.

Immediately after Nixon's declaration, a turmoil occurred in the Stock Exchanges of Western countries which hastened to close them down.Councils of ministers met in extraordinary session, financiers, bankers, international monetary and commercial organizations held separate or general meetings per country or bloc of countries to cope with the situation. According to UPI of August 17, 1971, an anti-US front has in fact come into being, comprising the US allies in Europe and Japan to defend their currency and their economy. Economists and financiers of Western countries have kept on criticizing Nixon's "new economic policy", demanding the devaluation of the dollar and the formation of a monetary system which would be freed from

the domination of the dollar. The Japanese Foreign minister stated that if the USA maintained the additional tax of 10 per cent on imports, Japan would take common action with the Common Market countries to oppose it. This monetary war lasted until the end of 1971 and Nixon was compelled to devaluate the dollar, abolish the additional tax of 10 per cent on imports and other trade barriers as from December 21, 1971.

For the first time since 37 years, the USA had to announce officially the devaluation of their money (In 1934, they had been compelled to do because of the 1929-1933 economic crisis). According to *AFP*, this has scored a weakening of the USA on the international plane. Under the Nixon administration, the USA has gradually lost its world supremacy, which has led to a debasement of the dollar, now unable to keep its dominant role in the world monetary system.

One of the main causes of the weakening of the position and prestige of US imperialism in the world lies in the aggressive war in Viet Nam. The prolongation of the war and the savage crimes it engenders have awakened the conscience of progressive mankind. In 1971, broad sections of world opinion regarded the PRG seven-point peace proposal as a correct basis to solve the Viet Nam problem, offering the USA the only issue to extricate itself out of the war in security and honour. Many heads of state of socialist countries, Asian, African, Latin American and capitalist countries, several international organizations and conferences, 700 well-known personalities in nine countries, 216 Swedish MPs, 237 others of India... have raised their voices

against the aggressive policy of US imperialism in Indochina and demanded of the American government an immediate end to this war and the immediate withdrawal of all US troops. "Weeks of solidarity" with Viet Nam have been held one after another in various countries and tens of millions of people have turned out in the streets to demand that the USA quit Viet Nam. Meetings and demonstrations of support to Viet Nam and other activities—photo exhibitions and film projections on Viet Nam, teach-ins on the crimes committed by the Americans in Viet Nam, fund raising and drug-collecting in favour of Viet Nam, etc. have taken place in many capitalist countries: France, Japan, Britain, Italy, West Germany, Canada, Iceland, Australia, New Zealand... In France, about fifty potical, trade-union and social organizations have engaged in common activities of support to Viet Nam. In Japan, on October 21, 1971—Day of united action against the war—one million and a half people held street demonstrations or meetings against the US aggression in Viet Nam in 800 places throughout the country. In Oslo, for the first time militarymen of the NATO bloc have taken part in a big demonstration in favour of Viet Nam and led this anti-US march. In the UNO, representatives of many countries have raised their voices against the US aggressors' crimes in Viet Nam. The UNO Committee for the Defence of Human Rights has met in several special meetings to discuss and analyse the various aspects of these crimes, and arrived at the conclusion that US imperialism has committed gross. violations of human rights and genocide in Viet Nam.

In February 1972, right at the time when Nixon put forward his "peace proposals and disclosed the contents of the private talks between the delegates of the Viet Nam Democratic Republic and the USA at the Paris Conference on Viet Nam in order to win over public opinion, the World Assembly for Peace and Independence of the Indochinese Peoples was held in Versailles. Were present one thousand two hundred delegates from eighty countries, among them over one hundred from the USA itself, representing the various trends of public opinion. Unanimously they vehemently denounced Nixon's policy of "Vietnamization" and supported the PRG position.

Thus a world front of support to the Indochinese deoples struggling against US aggression is shaped and develops with each passing day. Never has there been in the history of international relations a mass movement so vast, vigorous and continuous with so diversified forms of action, to back the struggle of a people for independence and freedom.

A too deep gap

In his State of the Union message at the beginning of 1971, Nixon said: "If we act boldly... we can close the gap between promise and performance in American government". One cannot deny that Nixon has acted boldly for the past three years. However, the gap remains big between his promises and the realities in the USA. There is a gap between the president and his people, the White House and the Congress, the US

administration and a fraction of the capitalist class, and among the members of the Republican Party.

The American economist Victor Perlo has remarked that "there is a serious credibility gap crisis between the Nixon administration and the capitalist class on economic matters comparable to the huge gap between the administration and the broad public in matters of foreign policies (*International Affairs*, N° 7, 1971).

This situation has worsened when the Pentagon "secret papers" have been suddenly disclosed in the American press. Said Professor Daniel Ellsberg, a former analyst of the Pentagon who revealed these documents:

"I felt as an American citizen, a responsable citizen. I could no longer cooperate in concealing this information from the American people. The (Nixon) administration has fallen victim to the same traps of 'arrogance and ignorance' as its predecessor—the same feeling of "now that we're in, it will go differently... I took this action of my own initiative, and I am prepared for all the consequences. Ten years in prison is very cheap if that would contribute to ending the war."

And Ellsberg has arrived at this conclusion that all the solemn declarations by Nixon on the Viet Nam problem since his accession to power are but "a set of lies — no different from lies in the past." (*Newsweek*, July 12, 1971).

It is not a hazard if thousands of GIs who have shed their blood on the Vietnamese battlefield to "defend

their fatherland" meet in Washington with other Americans to demonstrate against the war policy of the White House. Nor is it if millions of Americans from all social strata have turned out in the streets over the past three years to demand of Nixon an end to the Indochina war and the settlement of the economic crisis in the United States.

The joint appeal issued last autumn by the People's Coalition for Peace and Justice and the National Peace Action Coalition has stressed the main reasons of this struggle:

"Resistance to the war is continually rising as millions of workers lose their jobs and Viet Nam veterans can find none. The wage freeze proves that the Nixon administration is trying to force the nation's workers to bear the economic burden of the war. The fight to end the war is an essential part of the fight to check inflation, achieve full employment and guarantee an adequate income for every American.

"The nation's depressed economy starves schools, hospitals and welfare programs and places the heaviest burden on minorities, especially Black, Puerto Rican and Chicano youth. The cost of the war precludes adequate housing and a standard of living for all.

"Yet the destruction goes on:

"50,000 GIs dead, 300,000 wounded, 1,500,000 Indochinese killed, 8,000,000 homeless. Saturation bombing continues at a rate unprecedented in history. One fifth of Viet Nam lies desolate from chemical defoliants causing sharp increases in still births and genetic deformities."

Among the twenty-five million youths from 18 to 25 years who are electors in the USA, especially in colleges and schools many want "to drop Nixon overboard." Late in 1971, an opinion poll shows that Nixon can only get 18.7 per cent of votes among the students (*New York Times*, December 11, 1971). Never in the USA had the voice of the masses so much effect on the 'upper strata' like in the past two years. Both Democrat and Republican Congressmen have paid attention to the fact related by the Viet Nam veterans and have turned out in the streets together with the masses to demonstrate their reprobation of the war. The US Senate Foreign Relations Committee has held extraordinary sessions to discuss reports condemning the US aggressive war in Viet Nam and Indochina. Twice the US Senate has adopted the Mansfield amendment demanding of the government the withdrawal of all US troops within six months if all militarymen captured in Viet Nam can be repatriated during this period. It has also cut off part of the aid granted to the Saigon, Vientiane and Phnom Penh puppet administrations and asked to reconsider the whole of the foreign aid program of the Nixon administration, considering it one of the main causes of wars, Vietnamese style. The Senate minority leader Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, one of those who had supported Nixon's Viet Nam policy, had admitted that "There's feeling that the Senate ought to tell the President that we should get the hell out of the war. The President must think in terms of finality. He must make public some formula that clearly indicates the end of American participation in the war."

Generals both retired and in active service, politicians of repute who have served the present administration or the former ones, mayors and councillors have publicly criticized Nixon's policy. They have established two organizations — the "National Council for an Indochina deadline" and the "Coalition on National Priorities and Military Policy" — and struggle for an end to the war and budgetary priorities for US internal problems.

In his report on the situation of the USA in 1971 published in December 22, 1971 and in his State of the Union message delivered early this year, Nixon has still spoken of the "great achievements" obtained by his administration after three years of power. And like the previous years, the US president's fine words full of optimism which temporarily soothed public opinion have been at last refuted by many people. Nixon has come under strong attacks from all sides by students and youths, by colored and White people, by intellectuals and workers, by war veterans and militarymen in the active, by the Congress and Trade-unions, even by Republicans of his own Party. In the race to the White House, besides the vehement criticisms levied by the Democratic Party in the opposition, there is a movement within the Republican Party itself which tries to topple him. Thus the New York mayor, John V.Lindsay, one of its members, has declared in a press conference: "Many hundreds of thousands of voters—who supported the Nixon - Agnew ticket in 1968 — now have come to realize that they made a mistake. It has become clear that the Republican Party and its leaders in Washington

have finally abandoned the fight for a government that will respond to the real needs of most of our people—and those most in need. Despite Mr. Nixon's promise to end the war and bring the country together, Americans and Asians continue to die in Indochina. And at home we have a deeper sense than ever before of our nation fragmented by class and race and age... I can't support the present administration."(*Newsweek*, August 23, 1971).

To placate public opinion and discard the Viet Nam problem from the electoral campaign, on January 25, 1972, Nixon put forward a "new peace plan". But his new proposal has been immediately rejected by major anti-war organizations of the American people. Stated Jerry Gordon, a leading member of the National Peace Action Coalition: "Americans do not want an eight-point plan but one-point plan: for the US to get out of Indochina now, lock, stock and barrel". Senator Edmund Muskie, one of the possible Democrat nominees, has said, "I will keep talking about Viet Nam until someone in power proposes a peace plan that could succeed instead of repeating a past plan that has failed." He has also stressed, "Our overriding purpose today must be to withdraw every soldier, every sailor, and every airman in Indochina... The American people will not support an indefinite war."

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On the threshold of 1971, Nixon had said to the American people, "1971 will be a good year, and 1972—a very good year". However, the situation in the USA has evolved against this forced optimism. It has been

appraised by Edward Kennedy as follows, "Things were bad in 1969. They were worse in 1970 and now in 1971, we have the freeze and Phase Two." (1) (*Reuter*, November 21, 1971). To Nixon, it is clear that 1971 was a bad year, and 1972 will be worse if he does not change his policy. He has not been able to hide his anxiety. "We got caught up in a vicious cross fire and it became increasingly difficult to make people understand. These are the people who, after World War II, supported the Greek-Turkish aid program, the Marshall Plan, NATO. But today they are in disarray. They are terribly disillusioned about Viet Nam, which is so hard a problem to understand. And they have an enormous concern with home problems of a sort and a degree that did not face us a generation earlier. (*Newsweek*, March 22, 1971).

1972 will be the year of presidential election. Nixon will resort to every means to make himself reelected. He will try, in particular, to create the illusion that the USA is no longer engaged in the Viet Nam problem, that this problem can be settled, not directly with the Vietnamese people, but by other ways. He tries by every means to create the image of a president anxious to build world peace while continuing the war. His extremely cunning manoeuvres, sometimes carried out in a sensational way do influence the American people and foster some illusions. For he commands considerable

1. Phase Two in Nixon's "new economic policy" has been subjected to a vehement protest from various strata of the population, including George Meany and the leadership of the AFL-CIO.

propaganda means through the US government and the Republican Party. Therefore, the American people and world public opinion must heighten their vigilance so as to foil all the manoeuvres of this bellicist and perfidious president.

But, reelected or not, Nixon can no more cheat the American people for long. The objective relation of forces in Indochina and the world will not enable him to do so.

ANNEX

Battle-count in Indochina (1971)

SOUTH VIET NAM

Northern Quang Tri (near the 17th parallel)

— 15,000 US and puppet troops killed, wounded or captured.

— 430 planes and helicopters downed, destroyed or damaged.

— 1,200 military vehicles wrecked or set afire.

— 127 vessels and launches sunk or set ablaze.

— 140 heavy guns and mortars wrecked or seized.

— 100 depots of fuel and munitions destroyed or set afire.

Tri-Thien region (Quang Tri and Hai Van pass)

— 12,000 US and puppet troops killed, wounded or captured.

— 360 planes and helicopters downed, destroyed or damaged.

— 480 military vehicles wrecked or set afire.

— 38 military trains upturned.

— 11 vessels sunk or set ablaze.

— 45 heavy guns and mortars wrecked or seized.

— 11 logistic depots destroyed or set afire.

Central Trung Bo (from Hai Van pass to Cam Ranh)

— 85, 400 US and puppet troops killed, wounded or captured (including 11,400 GIs and South Korean mercenaries).

— 656 planes and helicopters downed, destroyed or damaged.

— 3,200 military vehicles wrecked or set afire (700 lorries and armoured cars).

— 60 military trains upturned.

— 25 vessels and launches sunk or set ablaze.

— 300 logistic depots set afire (160,000 tons of bombs and munitions, 80 million litres of fuel).

— 1,220,000 people freed from enemy control.

High Plateaux

— 18,000 US and puppet troops killed, wounded or captured.

— 137 planes and helicopters downed or destroyed.

— 1,100 military vehicles wrecked or set afire.

— 70 heavy guns and mortars destroyed or seized.

— 27 logistic depots destroyed or set ablaze.

— 37,000 people freed from enemy control.

Southern Trung Bo (from Cam Ranh to Ham Tan)

— 11,700 US and puppet troops killed, wounded or captured (including 750 Gls and South Korean mercenaries).

— 51 planes and helicopters downed, 30 others damaged.

— 280 military vehicles wrecked or set afire (including 70 armoured cars).

— 8 military trains upturned,

— 13 heavy guns and mortars destroyed.

Eastern Nam Bo (provinces around Saigon)

— 35,000 US and puppet troops killed, wounded or captured (including 5,600 GIs, Australian and Thai mercenaries).

— 300 planes and helicopters downed, destroyed or damaged.

— 1,400 military vehicles wrecked, set afire or seized (300 lorries and armoured cars).

— 165 vessels and launches sunk or set ablaze.

— 75 heavy guns and mortars wrecked or seized.

— 100 logistic depots destroyed or set ablaze.

Central Nam Bo (riparian provinces of the Mekong)

— 32,600 US and puppet troops killed, wounded or captured.

— 77 planes and helicopters downed or damaged.

— 420 military vehicles destroyed or set afire.

— 150 vessels and launches sunk or set afire.

— 40 heavy guns and mortars wrecked or damaged.

— 22 logistic depots destroyed or set ablaze.

— 1,500 hamlets freed from enemy control.

Eastern Nam Bo (1) (provinces southwest of the Mekong).

— 16.000 US and puppet troops killed, wounded or captured (including 600 GIs and 400 puppet officers).

— 160 planes and helicopters downed or damaged,

— 55 armoured cars wrecked.

(1) U Minh region alone,

— 180 vessels and launches sunk or set afire.
— 80 heavy guns and mortars destroyed or seized.
— 60 herding zones dismantled.

South Viet Nam (total)

— 230,000 US and puppet troops killed, wounded or captured (including 20,000 GIs and mercenaries of US satellite countries).

— 2,100 planes and helicopters downed, destroyed or damaged.

— 7,000 military vehicles wrecked, damaged or seized.

— 500 locomotives and carriages of military trains upturned.

— 450 heavy guns and mortars destroyed or seized.

— 560 logistic depots set ablaze or destroyed (including Cam Ranh, Deo Son, Ka Tum...)

— Millions of people freed from enemy control.

LAOS

— 32,000 soldiers of the Rightist forces, Vang Pao gangs, Thai and Saigon puppet troops killed, wounded or captured.

— 700 planes and helicopters downed, destroyed or seized.

— 800 military vehicles wrecked, set afire or captured.

— 11,000 weapons destroyed or seized.

CAMBODIA

— 80,000 enemy troops killed, wounded or captured (including 28,000 Saigon troops and GIs).

— 600 planes and helicopters downed, destroyed or damaged.

— 2,700 military vehicles wrecked, set afire or seized.

— 200 vessels and launches sunk or set afire.

— 150 logistic depots destroyed or set ablaze.

NORTH VIET NAM

— 56 US planes and helicopters downed (including a B.52 and many jet fighter-bombers).
— Many pilots killed or captured.
— 3 vessels sunk or set afire.

Escalation of war crimes under Nixon

Massive bombing and shelling

+ According to US official sources, during the first three years of the Nixon administration (1969 - 1971) the Americans fired or dropped on the ground in Indochina over 7 million tons of shells and bombs. More than 3 millon tons of bombs were used, mostly in South Viet Nam.

+ This bomb tonnage is greater than that released in the five years of the Johnson administration (1964-1968) and that dropped by the USA during the Second World War (1941 - 1945) and the Korean war (1950- 1953).

+ According to *Le Monde* (July 29, 1970), the US air force released in Indochina the equivalent of eleven 20-kiloton atomic bombs (Hiroshima type) each month of this year.

The same paper (November 3, 1971) revealed that in the first eight months of this year two million tons of bombs were dropped in South Viet Nam.

+ Under the Johnson administration, the US air force used in South Viet Nam a monthly average of

800,000 tons of bombs. This figure has gone up to 1,377,000 tons under the Nixon administration, that is an increase of 72 per cent.

+ Under Nixon, the Americans use up to 4,000 planes and helicopters in Indochina, including those based on aircraft-carriers and stationed in Thailand, among which about forty B.52s.

+ The number of flights by these superbombers has zoomed from 1,600 each month in 1969 to 18,000 in 1970. Heavily-populated areas such as the Mekong delta, the coastal plains or some regions near Saigon have been taken as targets by these giant bombers. They drop 30 tons of bombs each from 8,000-10,000 metres, which accounts for the blind character of these massacres and the devastation wrought by their bomb-carpets. In some days, there are up to one hundred flights, which means 3,000 tons of bombs released in South Viet Nam (*AP*, August 17, 1970).

+ 400 people have been killed in Thanh My village, Kien Phong province, on the left bank of the Mekong river, bombed eight times by the B.52s during the last three years.

In March 1970, a B. 52 raid on Luong Hoa, Luong Phuc and Luong My villages in Ben Tre province, one of the most densely populated provinces of South Viet Nam, took the life of 85 people, wounded many others and devastated a region well-known for its prosperity.

+ South Viet Nam is criscrossed with shells by over 2,500 high-caliber howitzers and cannons of the US puppet ground and naval artillery. The number of

shells lobbed daily exceeds tens of thousands. In Quang Tri, for instance, it surpasses the 20,000 figure.

+ The biggest conventional bomb ever made has been currently used in great amount in South Viet Nam under Nixon. It is a 15,000-lb "super-bomb" (nearly 7 tons) which, according to two American scientists (1), kills all living beings within a radius of 1,000 metres and is second only to the atomic bomb as to its devastating effects.

+ New kinds of bombs have been devised, ever more sophisticated to cause the maximum of devastation and lethal effects: laser-guided bombs, TV self-guided bombs, bombs which burst under the effect of a variation of the magnetic field or a sismic shock, shrapnel or steel flechette-capsules, antipersonnel bombs which, on the contact of the ground, throw in all directions eight tiny strings which command the explosion, etc.

Intensified chemical warfare

+ Under Nixon (1969-1971), 2,270,000 hectares of fields and forests were sprayed with "herbicides" and "defoliants", 1,880,000 hectares of crops destroyed, and 900,000 people intoxicated. including several hundred to death.

+ Sprayings of chemicals continue despite the protests of qualified scientific circles in the USA and in the

(1) Professors E. W. Pfeiffer of Montana University and Arthur H. Westing of Windham College — Report read at the International Conference on Medecine and the Indochina War held in Paris on December 4 and 5, 1971.

world and the official promises of Washington to stop them. According to still incomplete information, in 1971 the Americans continued the sprayings in Rach Gia and Tra Vinh provinces (Mekong delta) in February, in Quang Tri and Phu Yen in March, in Phu Yen in April in Hue region in May, etc.

— Massacres and devastations by systematic mopping-up operations

+ Between 1969 and 1971, at least 60,000 raids, involving in the minimum one battalion each, were launched by the US puppet troops in South Viet Nam. The number is still greater of those involving lesser forces.

+ Following are some typical operations:

— Operation "Frederick Hill," waged in Quang Tri province, southeast of Da Nang from March 1970 to, March 1971.

— Operation "Iron Mountain," carried out in Quang Ngai province from March 18, 1970 to March 1, 1971 by the Americal Division notorious for its massacre of Son My in 1968. According to US authorities (quoted by *Reuter* on March 3, 1971), the US troops killed 4,476 people and arrested 2,724 others during this operation.

Mopping up of the U Minh forest in the southernmost part of the country from December 1970 to December 1971: 4,903 people killed, thousands of others wounded, 300 arrested, 65, 951 forcibly concentrated in herding zones. On the territory of Ca Mau province which was raided, 909 women, girls and children were

slaughtered and injured, and hundreds raped by Saigon troops.

— Losses incurred by the civilian population of the Mekong delta owing to the mop-ups in 1969: 100,000 people killed and wounded, whole villages completely razed.

— Against Ben Tre province (in the mouths of the Mekong) 6,000 raids were launched in the 1969 and 1970 causing 4,300 dead and 3,500 wounded among the civilian population, 4,000 arrested, 4,000 dwelling destroyed, and about one hundred hamlets sacked.

+ Many cases of genocide Son My - style:

— In 1969, the population of several villages in Ba Lang An peninsula southeast of Chu Lai US base was checked from January to March: 300 suspects were excecuted. In March, 1,200 remaining suspects were drowned in the sea.

— In Quang Tin province, 90 massacres were perpetrated in 1969: 4,700 people killed (including 1,959 women and children), 12,400 dwellings destroyed, 6,000 head of cattle slaughtered and drafted. The most typical crime was committed in November 1969 in Binh Duong village, Thang Binh district: 349 people slain, most of them women and small children.

— Massacre of Kon H'Rinh, north of Kontum on the High Plateaux on February 22, 1969: 350 inmates of a herding camp killed in one night.

— In March 1970, 300 people slaughtered in Ca Mau province.

— In October 1970,147 others in two places of Phu Yen province.

— According to US official figures, 125,000 people constituted for one-third of children under 13 years were killed and wounded in 1970. As admitted by Williams Colby, in charge of the "pacification" program in South Viet Nam until 1971, "from the beginning of the war to April 1971, 5,800,000 civilians (one-third of the South Vietnamese population) were killed, injured or made homeless" (*AP* of April 21, 1971).

— Most barbarous means were used to torture or slay the victims:

— On April 15, 1970, a child was slaughtered in Le Bac hamlet, Duy Xuyen district, Quang Da province, his skull shattered with rifle-butt.

— On February 29, 1970, several old folk and children had their throats cut with bayonet in Son Thach village, Que Son district, Quang Tin province.

— On July 15, 1969, in Binh Minh hamlet, Vinh Thuan district, Rach Gia province, a person was disembowelled with sword and his liver torn out.

— A young woman was raped by several GIs who then thrust a lighting flare in her womb and set it off, killing the victim (after the disclosure of a GI quoted by Wall Street Journal of May 13, 1970).

+ The "Phoenix" teams are gangs of patented thugs CIA-organized and specialized in the "physical liquidation" of resistance cadres or those supposed as such. It is the iron fist which is hidden under the velvet

screen in the "pacification". According to the *Baltimore Sun* (May 26, 1971), in 1970 the "Phoenix" teams liquidated 1,850 people in the average each month.

+ A systematic destruction of whole regions has been deliberately carried out to compel the inhabitants to come and live in herding zones set up by the USA.

—Of the 870 hamlets in the two northern provinces of South Viet Nam (Quang Tri and Thua Thien), nearly 500 have been razed. The entire district of Hai Lang (southeast of Quang Tri) has been turned into a no man's land, its 80,000 population having been concentrated.

— Quang Da province (or Quang Nam) which surrounds Da Nang has had 351 hamlets blotted out (out of 441). A white zone 32 kilometres long by 15-20 kilometres wide has been established around Da Nang which shelters the biggest US base in Southeast Asia. In Dien Ban district, south of Da Nang, 20 out of 27 villages have been obliterated.

— A powerful modern material has been used to thoroughly destroy the inhabited zones, the crops and the forests. Let us cite for example the Rome plows, a giant bullodozer called D-7E (20 tons, with a blade three metres wide and weighing 2.5 tons) able to level about one-half of an hectare of forest in an hour. Since the beginning of 1971, 200-300 of these machines have destroyed over one hundred villages in Trang Bang and Cu Chi districts, northwest of Saigon, on the Tay Ninh and Phnom Penh road. The US arsenal in South Viet Nam still has in lesser number another machine, the

D-9 which by far outwits the D-7E in power, size and weight.

Forcible evacuation and mass concentration of the population

+ According to the figures quoted by the US Senate Juridical Commission, the number of "displaced" people reaches 6 million in South Viet Nam, one-third of the total population. To subdue the people's resistance, one of the main goals of Washington is to eliminate the NFL cadres. To this end, the Americans resort to the concentration of people in centres put under their control. Therefore the material and moral life of the "displaced" people is thoroughly disturbed.

The living conditions in these herding zones are among the hardest despite the American concern to create a glowing facade with such modern equipment as power batteries, TV...

+ In Tan Tuong centre, Quang Tri province, 12,000 people have been herded on an area of four square kilometres. The narrow space, the lack of hygiene, the heat of summer, the wilful irresponsibility of the superior authorities and the neglect of the local authorities have caused the death of 500 people while 1,000 others have fallen ill for months.

+ At the beginning of 1971, among the 450 families of 60 hamlets in the High Plateaux concentrated in a centre of the valley, at least 300 people died of diseases due to this change in dwelling and mode of life.

+ Nixon has not given up this criminal measure. A plan recently disclosed in the American press provides for the removal of the 3,500,000 inhabitants of five northern provinces of South Viet Nam to turn the whole area into a white zone of "free shooting".

Round-ups and repression against the urban population

+ In 1959, 7,000 round-ups were carried out in Saigon. On October 6, 1969, under the direction of US "advisers", nearly 10,000 "rangers," policemen and civilian defence guards made a big round-up in the 7th and 8th wards of the city.

+ In 1970, in the framework of a campaign dubbed "For the people", from September to December, the police searched 280,000 people and arrested 11,000.

The same year, during three operations against three northernmost towns (Hue, Quang Tri and Dong Ha) 30,000 people were checked, hundreds were arrested and tortured.

— In December 1970, a police round-up in the Minh Mang student quarters in Saigon made 300 arrests.

A huge penitentiary system

+ Hundreds of thousands of people languish in about one thousand prisons in South Viet Nam.

According to *AFP* (April 29, 1971), the figure reaches 400,000.

+ Washington has made huge appropriations for the maintenance and enlargement of these jails and internment centres.

According to official figures released in Saigon and Washington, a yearly budget of 6,761,000 dollars is allocated to the payment of US "advisers" and the personnel of the penitentiary system, and 100 million dollars to the enlargement of internment sites.

At Poulo Condor (Con Son) penitentiary, 172,000 dollars were spent in the 1970-1971 fiscal year to build 4,065 cells of the "tiger cage" type. According to *UPI* (December 19, 1971) from 400,000 to 500,000 dollars went to the erection of 300 seclusion centres comprising 96 "tiger cages" each.

+ An inhuman regime is enforced in the South Vietnamese prisons.

World opinion has been deeply upset by the disclosure of the notorious "tiger cages" at Poulo Condor. In these concrete "cages", the internees were jammed naked, winter or summer, deprived of natural light, sprayed with cold water in winter and quick lime, deliberately under-nourished, caned, abused, kept at sight by wardens specially trained to this effect by US "advisers".

The Hoi An and Bien Hoa prisons, designed for 200 internees, actually shelter 2,000. In Can Tho prison, ten persons are jammed in two-square-metre cells...

+ Deliberate massacres of prisoners:

— At Poulo Condor (Con Son) penitentiary:

March 1969, machinegunning against 800 internees of a camp, causing many victims.

November 1969, rifle-firing and grenade-throwing against the internees of camp A6, causing 46 dead and over one hundred wounded.

October 1970, bloody repression by three companies of soldiers, causing 25 dead among the political internees.

February 1971, 70 political internees mysteriously disappeared, drafted by the authorities toward an unknown place.

— At Cay Dua camp, Phu Quoc island:

May 1969, barbarous repression of internees, causing 54 dead and wounded.

November 1969, new repression, 60 dead and wounded.

May 19, 1970, 156 dead and wounded.

June 1970, 11 dead and wounded.

August 28 and November 13, 1970, 36 dead and wounded.

August 24, 1970, machinegunning at one hundred internees, causing many victims.

— At Chi Hoa prison (Saigon);

November 28, 1969, on order of their superiors, the penitentiary authorities eliminated 70 women internees.

August 18, 1970, general beating of internees, causing two dead and 200 wounded.

— At Thu Duc prison (near Saigon, reserved for women):

August 28, 1969, barbarous repression, causing 200 killed and wounded.

— At Tan Hiep prison (Bien Hoa):

November 28, 1970, 40 internees killed and wounded following a repression.

— At Tay Ninh prison:

June 18, 1969, massacre of 100 internees by Claymore.

Chronology 1971

JANUARY

1 — President Ton Duc Thang's New Year Message called on the Vietnamese people to strengthen their unity with the Lao and Cambodian peoples in a common effort to oust the US imperialists from the Indochinese peninsula.

— *Newsweek* reported the sagging morale of the GIs in South Viet Nam.

4 — In a press conference, Nixon advanced a "new policy" concerning the DRVN: If American troops were attacked in South Viet Nam, "military targets" in North Viet Nam would be struck.

6 — M. Laird stated in Saigon: after 1970, there remained in South Viet Nam not only units of US air force and logistic support but also ground troops to protect US air and logistic bases. Laird's visit to Saigon prepared for the invasion of Southern Laos by Saigon troops, as revealed later by the Western press. Thomas Moorer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, also visited Saigon.

7 — Thieu appointed six of his men province chiefs in view of the August and October elections.

10 — The Congress of the People's Movement for Peace of South Viet Nam with a 2,000 attendants urged the withdrawal of all foreign troops and respect of the South Vietnamese people's sovereignty.

11 — Retail prices in South Viet Nam went up 30 per cent compared with 1970, and inflation, 40 per cent, *BBC* reported.

20 — Laird declared to continue using US air force in Cambodia.

21 — Thieu promulgated a new decree against the press, but he was compelled to drop it on February 16 in face of public protest.

22 — The Cambodian NLAF attacked Pochentong airfield near Phnom Penh, wiping out nearly all Lon Nol's air force: 90 aircraft destroyed, 750 men killed or wounded, about one hundred military vehicles and 10.000 tons of bombs destroyed.

24 — The DRVN government released a statement condemning the intensification of the US war in Cambodia.

29 — Rogers stated: The US might use its air power to the maximum against any part of Indochina to "protect" GIs' lives in South Viet Nam.

30 — 25 mass organizations in Saigon made public a protest against Thieu's dictatorial, fascist and pauperizing policy.

31 — US violation of DRVN sovereignty in January: 2,622 sorties of reconnaissance planes, 59 raids of B.52s, 2 missions of chemical spraying and 182 bombing flights.

FEBRUARY

1 — Opening session of the "People's Tribunal" held by the "Viet Nam Veterans Against the War" in Detroit (Michigan) to condemn the US war in South Viet Nam.

2 — Communique on the 19th Plenum of the Viet Nam Workers' Party Central Committee: keep up the resistance to US aggression while intensifying it; stiffen the resolve to fight and win to proceed towards the peaceful reunification of the country; directives on the orientation of North Viet Nam economy in the near future: gradually build the structures for a big socialist production; consolidate the relations of production and develop agriculture.

7 — Waves of attacks launched since February 1 in the coastal provinces lying between Da Nang and Cam Ranh: 16 urban centers, 6 airfields, 2 US bases, a division HQ of the Americans, 3 regiment CPs and many military posts: 2,000 American and puppet troops killed or wounded, 23 posts razed.

8 — Joint Statement of President Ton Duc Thang and Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, reaffirming the determination of the two peoples to fight and win complete victory over the US imperialist aggressors. This statement crowned the visit of the Cambodian Head of State to the DRVN from January 26 to February 9.

— Statement of the Lao Patriotic Front Central Committee condemning the US-Saigon aggression against Southern Laos (Operation "Lam Son 719").

10 — Statement of the DRVN government on US war escalation and extension in Laos.

12 — The Senate of Montana (USA) passed a resolution urging a clear-cut time-limit for the total withdrawal of US troops from South Viet Nam.

15 — Accords on non-refund economic and military complementary aid for 1971 granted by the Chinese People's Republic to the DRVN signed in Peking on February 15, 1971.

— Thieu launched a new "pacification" campaign named "Dong Tien" in Saigon. A previous campaign named "Vi Dan" (from September 15 to December 1970) had ended with 200,000 persons arrested, tortured or drafted into the puppet army:

— Thieu reaffirmed his "four nays" policy:

+ no coalition with the Communists,

+ no territorial concession to the Communists,

+ no neutrality, and

+ no legal activities for the Communists.

17 — Nixon tried to justify his war escalation in Laos: the operation would be limited in space and time with the aim of protecting GIs' lives, etc. He repeated what Rogers had said on January 29; no limitation to the use the US air force on the whole Indochinese territory.

25 — The Soviet government declared that it would grant all necessary aid to the DRVN and to the Indochinese peoples.

— A new report on US foreign policy was submitted by Nixon to the American Congress reaffirming the "Nixon doctrine" and "Vietnamization".

— The Saigon 3rd Para Brigade was written off, a colonel and all his staff officers captured on Hill 456 (Southern Laos).

— Oil price in Saigon increased from 30 to 50 per cent.

27 — The DRVN Foreign Minister declared his support to the stand of the PRG of the RSVN which reaffirmed the Vietnamese people's right of property on all natural resources in the Vietnamese territory and repudiated the agreements to be signed between the Saigon puppet administration and all foreign countries, firms or organizations, allowing the latter to survey and extract oil in the maritime zone of South Viet Nam.

MARCH

1 — Thieu signed a decree putting the police under his own command, and increasing its strength from 85,000 to 100,000 men.

— The Cambodian patriots hammered at Sihanoukville, destroying the oil refinery and putting out of action 350 enemies.

2 — Operation "Iron Mountain" launched on March 11, 1970 by the Americal Division in Quang Ngai: nearly 2,500 South Vietnamese civilians killed and 2,700 others abducted (*Reuter*, March 3, 1971).

— The 44th Infantry Regiment in Song Mao (200 km east northeast of Saigon) overrun by the PLAF: 550 Saigon troops knocked out, wounded or captured.

3 — The DRVN Foreign Ministry released a statement condemning the US intensification of war acts and preparation of a new military adventure against the DRVN.

— Operation "Toan Thang 1-71" conducted by Saigon troops for a month in the Hook area, northeast of Cambodia: 10,000 adverse troops killed, wounded or captured, 950 vehicles, 10 heavy guns and mortars destroyed, 100 planes shot down by the NUFK armed forces.

4 — A regular Saigon battalion was trounced by the PLAF northwest of Kontum on the High Plateaux: 300, men killed or wounded, 60 others captured.

5 — A delegation of the Communist Party and the Government of the People's Republic of China led by Chou En-lai visited the DRVN.

— A joint communique was signed on March 8: "The Chinese people are determined to take all necessary measures, including the greatest national sacrifices to best help the Vietnamese people and other Indochinese peoples win total victory over the American aggressors.

8 — Saigon Radio admitted that South Viet Nam had to import 600,000 tons of rice.

— The Senate of Minnesota (USA) adopted a resolution condemning the US war in Viet Nam.

10 — On the Bolovens Plateau in Southern Laos, a Rightist battalion was wiped out and 3 others decimated at Nam Luc.

16 — On the Chepone Front in Southern Laos, a whole Saigon battalion was written off on Hill 723 ("Lolo" base) 1,000 men killed or wounded, 200 others captured 16 heavy guns seized or destroyed, and 28 planes shot down.

— The biggest enemy reverse in Operation "Lam Son 719" the Ban Dong entrenched camp assailed, the bulk of the enemy force (2 brigades and 1 regiment) completely smashed.

17 — A B.52 violating the DRVN territory was downed.

18 — Saigon "Senate" rejected Clause 7, article 10 of Thieu's draft electoral law which required that all candidates of the presidential elections be endorsed by at least 40 MPs or 100 members of provincial or municipal councils.

19 — The *Nhan Dan*, central organ of the Viet Nam Workers' Party exalted Angela Davis's heroism and demanded that the American authorities release her immediately.

21 — US raids against the DRVN: 6 planes downed. The DRVN Foreign Ministry condemned these attacks, Laird threatened with larger-scale bombings. In Paris, boycott by the DRVN and PRG of the RSVN of the March 25 session of the Conference as a protest.

22 — Operation "Lam Son 719" ended in disaster for the US-Saigon troops after 43 days of fighting:

15,400 adversaries (including 200 GIs) killed or wounded, 1,000 others captured, 496 aircraft downed, 586 armoured cars and vehicles, 144 heavy guns and mortars destroyed or seized by the Lao PLA.

23 — Ta Con airfield (Khe Sanh base — SVN) where the remnants of Saigon units regrouped from Southern Laos was raided by the PLAF : 40 choppers, 18 vehicles and 7 fuel storages set ablaze.

25 — An agreement was concluded in Santiago for a DRVN trade representation to be set up in Chile.

27 — A delegation of the Viet Nam Workers' Party headed by Le Duan left for Moscow to participate in the 24th Congress of the CPSU.

28 — The heaviest setback of American troops over the last years : "Mary Ann" base at Xa Doc (80 km south of Da Nang) was stormed : 350 GIs of the 196th Brigade put out of action and 4 heavy guns destroyed.

29 — Duc Zuc district center (40 km southwest of Da Nang) went under PLAF control until April 8 : 1000 adversaries knocked out, all "strategic hamlets" pulled down over an area 30 sq km wide.

31 — A 20,000 strong demonstration of Da Nang people against the sending of Saigon troops to Laos and Cambodia.

— The US House of Representatives adopted a resolution demanding the withdrawal of US troops from Indochina before January 3, 1973.

APRIL

3 — "Counter-pacification" in 6 coastal provinces between Da Nang and Cam Ranh : 5,000 American and Saigon troops put out of action, 24 planes downed, 80 vehicles, 19 aircraft and 12 fuel depots set afire.

6 — Ban Na, Long Cheng region (Northern Laos) was liberated by the Lao PLA : 700 adverse troops annihilated.

7 — Nixon's speech : A new withdrawal of GIs up to December 31,1971, Vietnamization going on with so-called end of "American engagement".

11 — The North Vietnamese elected 420 delegates to the DRVN National Assembly.

12 — The Senate of Vermont (USA) passed a resolution urging the total withdrawal of American troops from South Viet Nam.

13 — Tough fighting in the Ngoc Rinh Rua mountain range (High Plateaux) where Fire Base N°6 had been assailed by the PLAF on March 31 : 1,600 enemy troops put out of action, 34 planes downed in 2 weeks.

15 — Balance-sheet of "counter-pacification" in the western part of the Mekong delta (1st fortnight of April) : 2,000 Saigon troops wiped out and 10,000 people participating in political struggles, breaking the enemy grip in 150 herding centers and inciting 600 militarymen to return home.

— Demonstration of 1,000 puppet soldiers' families to urge the cessation of the war and protest against the sending of Saigon soldiers to Cambodia and Laos.

16 — A new speech by Nixon: he proposed a total pull-out of US troops on two conditions — the capacity of the Saigon army to defend itself and the release of all American airmen captured in North Viet Nam.

17 — 17 big trade-unions in Saigon passed their 2nd resolution demanding the abolition of income-tax.

20 — Thousands of GIs back from South Viet Nam demonstrated in Washington, condemning the crimes committed by the US troops in South Viet Nam and demanding the total withdrawal of GIs from South Viet Nam. Opening of the "Week of Action for a 'People's Peace Treaty' with the Vietnamese" organized by the US Students' Association.

21 — The 15-day strike of the Saigon Esso workers ended in success after causing a 12-million piasters loss to the firm.

24 — American people's spring offensive against the Viet Nam war: one million people demonstrated in the streets of Washington and San Francisco.

— A half-day strike by 18 trade-unions representing various branches and trades in Saigon: 80,000 participants on the first day and 100,000 the second day.

— "Hoang Anh" base (northwest of Quang Ngai) assailed: 400 pupet troops including 3 high-ranking officers killed, wounded or captured.

25 — A coup de main against the Lam Son military training camp (South Viet Nam): 500 instructors and cadets put out of action within 20 minutes.

27 — The leaders of 27 US religious organizations representing 86 million believers come out against the Indochina War.

— From January to April: Important victories of the Cambodian patriots on Road 4, southwest of Phnom Penh: 6,500 adverse troops put out of action, 6 battalions and 10 companies wiped out.

MAY

1 — A new "pacification" programme dubbed "plan for rural security and regional development" was enforced by the Saigon administration.

2 — Following the April 24 demonstration, popular actions within the framework of the American people's offensive against the Viet Nam war developed without let-up in US big cities.

— Muong Phalane (Southern Laos) liberated by the patriotic forces: 600 Rightist soldiers put out of action.

7 — In the first week of May 16 enemy posts in Dai Loc region (southwest of Da Nang) stormed: nearly 900 puppet soldiers killed, wounded or captured.

19 — President Ho Chi Minh's 81st anniversary celebrated in Hanoi: Vice-Premier Nguyen Duy Trinh exhorted the Vietnamese people to act upon his teachings.

22 — The 183rd Convention of the "United Presbyterian Church" representing 3 million Americans issued a statement against Nixon's Viet Nam policy and for the withdrawal of US troops before the end of 1971.

23 — The International Assembly of Christians sympathizing with the Indochinese peoples passed a resolution voicing its support to the latter's fight and called on all its believers to struggle for the setting of an early deadline for the complete withdrawal of US-satellite troops.

— Cam Ranh, a US great logistic base in Southeast Asia assaulted: 45 million litres of fuel set ablaze.

25 — A seven-day strike of the Shell workers caused a loss of 50 million piasters to the firm.

30 — A Viet Nam - Laos joint declaration was signed in Hanoi on the occasion of the visit of a Lao people's delegation headed by Prince Souphanouvong to the DRVN (from May 24 to 30).

31 — At Snuol (170 km east-northeast of Phnom Penh) the Saigon invading forces were completely crushed and expelled from this sector of Cambodia : 1,500 men killed or wounded, 300 others captured, 230 armoured cars and trucks and dozens of heavy guns destroyed. A battalion escaped to the frontier but was wiped out and another decimated.

JUNE

3 — The Saigon "Lower House" fraudulently passed Thieu anti-democratic electoral decree which has already been rejected by the "Senate" on March 18.

5 — A 10,000 strong demonstration against the US troops in Da Nang triggered by the death of a pupil run over by a US military truck.

9 — The DRVN National Assembly (4th Legislature) elected Ton Duc Thang, President of the DRVN ; Nguyen Luong Bang, Vice-President ; Truong Chinh, Chairman of the National Assembly ; and Pham Van Dong, Prime Minister of the Government.

— The Cambodian patriots attacked Srang town and its surroundings: 600 Lon Nol soldiers put out of action.

11 — Several Saigon ministers and vice-ministers were moved and replaced by Thieu in order to strengthen his electoral apparatus.

13 — *The New York Times* published the Pentagon's secret papers which gave an irrefutable proof of the US aggression against Viet Nam.

15 — A Rumanian Party and Government Delegation headed by Nicolae Ceausescu, Secretary-General of the State Council of the Rumanian Socialist Republic, paid a visit to the DRVN. A joint communique was signed.

19 — The Saigon puppet 49th Infantry Regiment CP in Dau Tieng (64 km northwest of Saigon) attacked: 400 men killed, wounded or captured.

20 — Prime Minister Pham Van Dong sent a message of thanks to the 2nd session of the International Commission of Inquiry into the US War Crimes in Indochina which met in Oslo, Norway.

23 — 38 American officers stationed at Fort Knox and Fort Jackson signed a motion demanding of the Nixon government a pull-out of all US troops from Viet Nam before December 31, 1971.

24 — " Fuller " base, south of the 17th parallel, equipped with ultra-modern detection apparatus, was stormed by the PLAF : 330 Saigon soldiers and 20 GIs put out of action.

26 — A 9-point proposal for the settlement of the Vietnamese question was handed by DRVN representatives to Kissinger during a private talk.

28 — Thieu killed Le Khac Sinh Nhat, a pro-government student, as a pretext to repress the opposition students.

30 — The DRVN Foreign Ministry published a statement supporting the Lao Patriotic Front's June 22 peace proposal : immediate cease-fire on the ground and in the air over the whole territory of Laos and immediate meeting between the parties concerned to restore peace and national concord.

31 — The Saigon administration disclosed that American aid was reduced from 750 million dollars in 1971 to 565 million in 1972.

JULY

1 — "The USA must withdraw all its troops, advisers, military personnel, weapons, equipment, dismantle its bases and end its aggression. It must scrap the Nguyen Van Thieu gang to pave the way for the establishment of a new administration ready to enter into talks with the PRG in order to set up a government of national concord." This peace initiative received a warm welcome

throughout the world and won the support of 70 governments. In Washington, the Nixon administration acknowledged the existence of " positive elements " in this plan but obstinately refused to give it a serious answer.

— A convention of 2,000 delegates of " The National Peace Action Coalition " in New York passed an anti-war plan for the Autumn Campaign.

7 — The " People's Movement against Electoral Frauds " came into being in Saigon, rallying representatives of 20 mass organizations, political parties, religious communities and trade-unions.

10 — A " Talk to Our Countrymen " drive was launched by Saigon students against Thieu.

15 — " Counter-pacification " in Central Trung Bo coastal provinces (from Da Nang to Cam Ranh) within 20 days (from June 26) : 2,500 Saigon soldiers and coercive agents, US and South Korean troops knocked out.

26 — 26 Saigon trade-unions decided on a 2-day strike against wage tax : 40,000 workers were called on to down tools on July 29 and 30.

29 — A " Movement of Universities for Controlling the Presidential Elections " was set up in Saigon.

31 — In July : 1,320 sorties of reconnaissance planes against the DRVN : 1,920 tons of bombs dropped.

AUGUST

1 — A government delegation of the Algerian Democratic and People's Republic led by Abdelazig Bouteflika, member of the Revolutionary Council, and Foreign Minister, visited the DRVN. A joint communique was signed.

2 — The Saigon "Supreme Court" rejected Nguyen Cao Ky's act to run the "presidential elections". The "Movement Against Electoral Frauds" protested against that decision and called on Duong Van Minh to withdraw his candidacy.

6 — Sirik Matak went to the USA to tout for US economic and military aid. Meanwhile Phnom Penh increased the issue of national bonds from one billion to three billion riels.

7 — Bunker returned to the USA to report to Nixon on the Saigon presidential elections.

— Nixon's "new economic policy" announced: convertibility of the dollar into gold suspended, a 10 per cent additional tax on imported goods, a 10 per cent diminution of US economic aid to foreign countries. The source of the US economic difficulties lies in the Viet Nam war, the *Nhan Dan* commented.

17 — At Qui Nhon port, a 10,000-ton US military cargo was sunk by the PLAF.

18 — A DRVN National Assembly delegation led by Hoang Van Hoan, vice-president of its Standing Committee, left Hanoi for a friendship tour in the USSR, Poland, Rumania and Czechoslovakia.

20 — New PLAF attacks near the 17th parallel: 1,250 enemies killed, wounded or captured, and 32 planes downed.

— General Duong Van Minh made known his withdrawal from the presidential elections, refusing to be "an accomplice in a farce".

— The North Vietnamese Catholic believers emigrated to the South set up a committee against electoral frauds.

21 — A delegation of the World Federation of Trade Unions arrived in Hanoi for a visit to the DRVN.

— The Saigon "Supreme Court" validated Nguyen Cao Ky's candidature which it had rejected some days earlier. Two days later (August 23) Ky declared that he withdrew from the elections because he did not want to be trapped in.

— Cam Ranh logistic depots came again under attack: 32 storages of 50,000 tons of bombs and shells were destroyed.

27 — Demonstrations against Thieu in 5 out of 6 cities of South Viet Nam.

28 — The funeral of the 2nd puppet soldier who had committed suicide in Da Nang was turned into a 15,000-strong demonstration to protest against Thieu (The funeral of the first soldier in Saigon rallied 25,000 participants).

29 — Thieu ordered to "shoot on the spot" any person resisting the police or protesting against it.

— A "Committee for Co-ordinated Action against Dictatorship" was found by many Saigon "senators", "representatives" and many religious organizations.

— The "elections" to the Saigon "Lower House" returned 159 "elected", most of them pro-Thieu.

30 -- "Counter-pacification" in the western part of Thang Binh district (40km from Da Nang): 370 enemy troops put out of action, 1,500 persons liberated from concentration centers.

SEPTEMBER

1 — The Swiss government made public its recognition of the DRVN.

2 — 15,000 Saigonese demonstrated to press for Thieu's resignation and US troop withdrawal.

3 — Funeral of student Pham Hanh in Quang Trung training camp: a 15,000-strong demonstration demanded the cancellation of the "program of military training in schools".

6 — School enrolment in the DRVN: 5 million pupils of general education and 1.5 million pre-school children, that is an increment of 10 per cent as against the previous year.

— DRVN National Assembly Vice-Chairman conveyed thanks to tke 237 Indian MPs who had called for the total pull-out of US troops from Viet Nam in 1971.

— In Saigon, the "Anti-US Movement" of school and college students called upon non-American foreigners

and anti-war Americans to wear badges to distinguish themselves from US aggressors and secure them from regrettable incidents.

9 — An open letter signed by 160 US trade-union leaders exhorted the American people and workers to step up their actions against Nixon's "new economic policy" and for the immediate cessation of the war.

10 — A delegation of the Japanese Communist Party led by the President of the Presidium of its Central Committee Miyamoto Kenji arrived in Hanoi for a friendship visit to the DRVN.

19 — A barbarous repression of the Saigon police against the students at Minh Mang Buddhist Institute: several hundred people wounded and 370 people jailed.

20 — Attack against the HQ of the puppet 18th Infantry Division at Trang Lon (near Tay Ninh, north-west of Saigon): 600 enemies killed or wounded, about one hundred military vehicles destroyed.

— In Cambodia, the two biggest fuel depots at Phnom Penh's gates were set ablaze by the Khmer patriots.

21 — A US provocation of extreme gravity against the DRVN: 200 air sorties a day to bomb several populated localities in Quang Binh province. This bombing was decided by Nixon. 2 US fighters-bombers downed and several others damaged.

— The DRVN Foreign Ministry issued a statement protesting against that war act. In Paris, the DRVN delegation put off the session of the Conference on Viet Nam. This bombing roused world indignation,

22 — The Saigon "Senate" adopted a motion proposing the cancellation of the October 3 elections.

24 — An economic delegation of the Chinese People's Republic led by Li Shien-nien, member of the Political Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee and Vice-Premier of the CPR State Council, arrived in Hanoi. An agreement on the CPR 1972 economic and military aid to the DRVN was signed.

26 — A "People's Co-ordinating Committee Against Nguyen Van Thieu's Dictatorship" was set up in Saigon by militarymen, political parties, "senators", "deputies".

30 — The US Senate passed a bill on war expenditure in Indochina, urging the cessation of all military activities and the complete withdrawal of US troops within 6 months.

— The National League of Families of Americans Captured and Missing in Southeast Asia held a Conference in Washington calling upon Nixon to fix a clear-cut time-limit for US troop withdrawal, end all support to Thieu and accept the PRG's seven points so that the captured GIs might be released.

— In September:

+ In Saigon: 108 issues of Saigon papers were seized.

+ In the DRVN: American violation of DRVN sovereignty : 1,790 sorties of reconnaissance planes and 2,580 tons of bombs dropped.

OCTOBER

3 — A Soviet Party and Government delegation led by Nicolai Podgorny, member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and President of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, arrived in Hanoi for a friendship visit.

— "Presidential elections" in Saigon: Thieu announced that he had been returned with more than 94 per cent of the votes (sic).

4 — 122 US representatives and 9 senators came out against the Saigon election farce.

7 — A Viet Nam—Soviet Joint Communique was signed: "The Soviet Union resolutely supports military, politically and diplomatically the Vietnamese people's resistance against US aggression until total victory."

— Signing of accords on Soviet economic and military aid to the DRVN and of a trade agreement between the two countries.

— Strike of 700 workers of the "Con O" (Vidopin) battery firm which was to last until 1972 in protest of the arbitrary dimissal of workers and for the betterment of working conditions.

10 — Establishment of diplomatic relations between the DRVN and Switzerland at ambassadorial level.

— "Counter-pacification" in Tra Vinh (South Viet Nam) in the first ten days of October: 30,000 attendances in local uprisings which dismantled 87 "strategic hamlets".

— The "Movement of School and College Students For Democracy and Peace" and the "Committee of Catholic Students Against the Puppet Government" were set up in Saigon.

12 — An 8-point "peace plan" was put forward by Kissinger at a private meeting in Paris between the DRVN and the USA. This plan, along with certain modifications, was published on January 25, 1972 by Nixon who infringed upon the secret of those meetings: no precise dateline for the total withdrawal of GIs, maintenance of a Saigon government at US beck and call.

13 — "National Day of Moratorium and Anti-War Demonstrations" in the USA involving 50,000 people in a dozen cities.

14 — 70 Saigon "MPs" condemned the legislative and presidential elections as "anti-constitutional" and "illegal".

19 — Within a week (from 13), the puppet troops supporting the "pacification" in the U Minh forest region suffered heavy setbacks: 600 men killed, wounded or captured.

20 — The Lon Nol, Cheng Heng, Sirik Matak clique dissolved the so-called "National Assembly" in Phnom Penh. Lon Nol said he would set up a "dictatorial regime".

24 — Visit of a Party and Government delegation of the DPR of Korea to the DRVN. Signing of a Korean economic and military aid agreement to the DRVN.

25 — The "Viet Nam Veterans Against the War" staged anti-war meetings and demonstrations in 60 American cities and many military bases.

29 — Premier Pham Van Dong sent a congratulatory message to the Chinese leaders on the restitution of UN representation rights to the People's Republic of China.

— US Senate rejected Nixon's foreign aid proposal of 2.9 million dollars.

— Thieu summoned to Saigon 42,000 paratroops, rangers, infantrymen and policemen to make preparations for his "inauguration" ceremony.

— Since August 21, 87 US military vehicles were set afire or destroyed by school and college students in their "Anti-US campaign".

31 — In October;

+ In Saigon: 141 issues of papers were seized.

+ US planes encroached upon the DRVN sovereignty:

1,435 flights of reconnaissance planes, 33 sorties of B.52s.

NOVEMBER

2 — A public poll in Massachusetts showed that 10,587 people were for and 3,124 against the immediate cessation of the war and the total withdrawal of US troops by the Nixon administration.

In Michigan, the ratio was 23,052 to 14,029.

7 — The Vientiane administration devalued the *kip* by 20 per cent.

8 — A report published by the Cornell University (USA) showed that the Nixon administration had dropped on Viet Nam during the last three years 3 million tons of bombs more than in the five years of the Johnson administration.

9 — 215 Swedish MPs sent to Nixon a message asking him to accept the PRG 7 points.

10 — A NUFK and RGNUK delegation led by Ieng Sary, special envoy of the NUFK and RGNUK inland section, arrived in Hanoi for a friendship visit. A joint communique was released.

11 — 1,000 GIs in South Viet Nam addressed an anti-Vietnamization petition to the US Congress.

12 — In a press conference, Nixon subordinated the coming withdrawal of US troops to the PLAF's degree of activity, to the puppet troops' strength and to the Vietnamese's acceptation of releasing US pilots and a cease-fire Nixon style.

13 — Bitter reverse of Lon Nol army at Rum Luong: about one thousand soldiers put out of action.

15 — Thieu's new "economic-financial reform": New devaluation of the Saigon piaster and new taxes (the piaster lost from 45 to 130 per cent of its value).

20 — The US representatives, without plausible reason, did not come to a DRVN-USA private meeting already fixed.

— A Vietnamese Party and Government delegation led by Premier Pham Van Dong, member of the Political Bureau of the Viet Nam Workers' Party Central

Committee arrived in Peking for a seven-day visit. Signing of a joint communique reiterating the Chinese People's Republic support to the struggle of the Vietnamese and Indochinese peoples.

21 — Total fiasco of the biggest "pacification" operation begun a year ago against the U Minh area (Mekong Delta): 16,000 Saigon troops killed, wounded or captured, 160 aircraft downed or damaged.

25 — Establishment of diplomatic relations between the DRVN and Norway and Denmark.

28 — Statement of the Second International Conference of Jurists on Indochina in Algiers: Nixon's "Vietnamization" policy is a crime.

30 — Thieu issued 18 billion piasters in 1,000-piastre banknotes.

— From November 10 a 3-week "counter-pacification" was launched in My Tho province (Mekong Delta) during which 800 Saigon troops were knocked out.

— In Cambodia, on the front southwest of Phnom Penh since November 4 all roads were cut off, 2,100 Lon Nol troops killed or wounded, and 250 others captured.

— In November:

+ In Saigon 103 issues of papers were seized.

+ In DRVN 2,019 flights of US reconnaissance planes, 92 raids not including the raids by B.52s which dropped 7,200 tons of bombs.

DECEMBER

2 — End of Operation "Chenla II" started on August 20 : 12,000 Phnom Penh troops killed or wounded and one thousand others captured. It was the biggest battle of annihilation fought by the Cambodia patriots and the heaviest failure of "Khmerization".

3 — A GDR government economic delegation arrived in Hanoi to sign an agreement on economic and military aid to the DRVN.

4 — International Conference on Medicine and the Indochina War held in Paris. US Doctor Pfeiffer and Westing denounced the US use of 7.5-ton superbombs and giant bulldozers to destroy South Viet Nam ecology.

5 — "Rice and cloth campaign" staged by Saigonese students as a protest against the devaluation of the piaster.

6 — 32 mass organizations published a statement against a new invasion of Cambodia by Saigon troops.
12 — In 20 days, the Saigon troops lost in Damber area (Cambodia) 1,500 men, 120 military vehicles and 32 aircraft.

14 — The Third Congress of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front held in Hanoi adopted a resolution to mobilize all the forces available in the country to defeat the US aggressors and build socialism.

15 — Statement by the DRVN delegation to the Paris Conference on the high-handed behaviour of the US

delegation which had stayed away from two sessions on pretext that the Vietnamese representatives had not replied to the "US proposals".

18 — Devaluation of the dollar by 7.89 per cent.

— US planes penetrated deep into the territory of North Viet Nam (provinces of Thanh Hoa, Hoa Binh, Vinh Phu, Quang Ninh) and attacked a populated area in Nghe An province: 4 F4s downed and 4 pilots captured.

19 — General Vo Nguyen Giap declared on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the anti-French National Resistance: "We are determined to enhance our close militant solidarity with the fraternal Lao and Cambodian peoples, stand shoulder to shoulder with them to completely defeat the US imperialist aggressors."

20 — The DRVN Ministry of Foreign Affairs' spokesman condemned, in a press conference, the US air attacks against the DRVN and presented four US captured pilots.

21 — A Bulgarian Party and Government delegation led by Stanko Todorov, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, Chairman of the Council of Ministers arrived in Hanoi for a friendship visit to the DRVN. Signing of a joint communique and agreements on military and economic aid to the DRVN.

— Nearly all the Plain of Jars and Muong Soui center were liberated by the Lao PLA: two Vang Pao's tactical groups and 10 Thai battalions written off or

decimated, 17 aircraft downed, and 34 heavy guns destroyed or seized.

— The Lai Khe base (52 km north of Saigon) was attacked: 400 men of the puppet Fifth Infantry Division put out of action.

24 — A French Communist Party delegation led by René Piquet, member of the Political Bureau and Secretariat of the French Communist Party Central Committee, arrived in Hanoi for a friendship visit.

26 — Massive air raids against the DRVN on Nixon's order in five straight days: 19 aircraft were downed and many pilots captured. Damages were caused to the civilian people. The whole world was indignant. The DRVN government lodged an energetic protestation. Nixon argued by pleading the "protection of GIs" and the "liberation of US POWs" in North Viet Nam.

31 — Saigonese newspapers decided a 3-day strike beginning January 3, 1972 against the price rise of newsprint.

— US violation against the DRVN sovereignty in December: 1,380 sorties of reconnaissance planes and 4,250 tons of bombs dropped.

— Viet Nam 1971 balance-sheet;

+ In South Viet Nam: Heavy failure of "Vietnamization", 250,000 US and puppet troops killed, wounded or captured, 28 "pacification" teams disposed of or whittled down, 1,800 aircraft downed or destroyed,

600 heavy guns wrecked or seized, 700 vessels and combat launches sunk or set afire.

+ In North Viet Nam; the total value of industrial production increased by 14 per cent compared with 1970, electricity by 34 per cent, and coal by 22 per cent.

— The Viet Nam People's Army brought down 56 US planes, bringing to 3,427 the number of US planes lost since August 5, 1964.

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(Already published)

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This booklet deals with the situation in Indochina these last two years since Richard Nixon came to the White House.

What is the present state of "Vietnamization"? What major events have happened in Cambodia and Laos? How does the Nixon doctrine fare in Indochina?